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SABINE BARING-GOULD

THROUGH FLOOD AND FLAME.

VOL. I.

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THROUGH FLOOD AND FLAME.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THROUGH FLOOD AND FLAME.

Book I.—FLOOD.

CHAPTER I.

A rainy day in autumn, of all things most intolerable, especially when that day is drawing to a close, after having rained incessantly since dawn, and gives no hope of clearing up at evenfall.

From morning till night, patter, patter on the slates of the warehouse, and drip, drip, from the eaves, with a wearisome accompaniment of water guttering down the fall-pipe. It was a downright rain. It did not come with an angry plash against the window, as

though a bucket of water were being soused over it, and then rush away before the wind in an eddy, but descended in parallel perpendicular lines.

The office window was dim with drops, which, after remaining stationary one moment, dribbled lower, united with other drops, and then went down the pane at a gallop. The mill-gates were open, and admitted a turbid stream that was fed by driblets from every cranny, wall, and causeway, and which promised to convert the mill-yard into a Black Sea. Water and dirt had penetrated everywhere. A pool was within each doorway. Mats were soaked, floors stained by wet feet, windows leaking, skylights dripping. The steam from the escape-pipe trailed along the side of the dingy red factory, powerless to rise, and obscuring the windows. The dye-house was enveloped in a rank fog. The rush of ma-

chinery was over, for the six o'clock whistle had dismissed the hands, and there only remained those who had to "side" the waste.

Away they had gone, clattering, pattering, chattering, with shawls drawn over their heads, and skirts held up; spirits rising, tongues wagging; the dull walls ringing with their merry laughter. A few blue men, their clothes reeking with oil, their arms, hands and faces, the hue which was in vogue among the ancient Britons, had charged through the slush, sending it splashing over the girls;—and then all was quiet.

In the office, Hugh Arkwright was buttoning on his leggings. His books were closed, the pen laid down, and he was preparing to start.

"The river is rising fast," said his uncle, the proprietor of the factory. He was still writing; "I dare say we shall have a bit of a flood before morning."

"The Middups are under water already,' said Hugh; "Jim Hirst told me that the Calder was rising three inches in the hour. That was two hours ago."

"Indeed."

"Are you leaving now, sir?"

"No, Hugh. I may be half an hour longer. Now attend, please. I want you to go to the night-watch, and tell him to rouse me should the water reach the warehouse."

"Is there any chance of that?"

"It rose ankle-deep in '34; but that was an exceptional flood, and the weirs have been lowered eighteen inches since then. I do not expect a recurrence of flood, but there may be one."

"Where does the watchman live?" asked Hugh.

"You cannot miss his house, if you follow my directions. Go homeward, till you come

to the fork, then, instead of taking the right-hand lane, turn left ; cross the beck, and he lives in the only cottage you will see. It is in a sand quarry."

"I will go directly, sir."

"You have an umbrella?"

"I am armed against the worst weather. Look here!"

And he displayed a stout pair of boots, leggings, a waterproofed Inverness cape, and an umbrella that might have served Mrs. Gamp.

"What a slop and mess everything is in," he said, taking his hat. "Now, uncle, I am off. What is the watchman's name?"

"Joe Earnshaw."

Mr. Arkwright was one of the principal manufacturers in Sowden. His branch of trade was yarn-spinning. He was a practical man of business, well up in his profession, to which, indeed, he had been

educated; he was diligent, cautious, and thoroughly honourable. He lived quite within his means, in a small house not half a mile from the mill; and was supposed, not without good reason, to be saving money. He lived very quietly, keeping only one servant-maid, and a man to attend to his horse and gig, and cultivate the garden.

He was a square-built man of middling height, with grizzled hair which had been black, a grey beard, but no moustache. His nose was slightly aquiline, his mouth firm, his eye dark and roving. No one, judging from his features, would have supposed him to be a good-natured man; and good-natured he was not. He was fond of a joke, and could make himself agreeable in society; but at his business, his natural decision and peremptoriness came out. A light humour did not sit on him as though it suited him,

but as though he put it upon him, because he had determined on wearing it. His dark, restless eye indicated a temper which, when roused, would be violent; the lines about the mouth shewed that the same temper was under habitual control. He was agreeable in society, that is, in such society as he frequented, which consisted of the families of other manufacturers, of the doctor, and of the lawyer. His wit was common-place, not coarse, not refined, but broad. His conversational powers were chiefly exerted in what the French call *badinage*. His reading was limited to the newspapers; consequently his style of thought was not of the highest order, nor his taste cultivated to any great pitch of refinement. He liked to quote a few Latin words in his talk, but the words had been exclusively culled from leading articles in the *Manchester Guardian* and *Leeds Mercury*.

As a master, Mr. Arkwright was appreciated. His hands remained with him for years. He was perfectly just, and considerate as well. An operative whose conduct was bad was immediately dismissed, and he never wittingly engaged one with whose character he was not acquainted. It would be difficult to decide whether Mr. Arkwright was actuated in this respect by conscience or by policy. He certainly gave himself credit for acting on the purest of motives. As a general rule, mens' actions are better than the moving principle; the thread is always more valuable than the bobbin round which it is wound.

Mr. Arkwright was a married man, but had no child. His wife was a little German lady, the daughter of a Hamburg partner in a firm with which he had had business transactions. Quite lately, his nephew Hugh, an orphan, had come to Sowden, and

was living in his house, and working in his office. It was an understood thing that Hugh was to be his uncle's heir. Hugh was the son of a clergyman, the only brother of the manufacturer, who had lived on a small incumbency of £100 a year; the outs of which had devoured every spare shilling of the poor parson's income, so that when he died, Hugh was left totally unprovided for. But this mattered little to the young man, who had energy and abilities by which to make his own livelihood. His uncle had given him a home, and had found him work; and Hugh was gradually acquiring a knowledge of bookkeeping and trade, with the mysteries of which he had hitherto been profoundly unacquainted. He was very different in appearance from Mr. Arkwright, being tall, strongly built, full-breasted, broad-shouldered, erect, with thick brown hair and light whiskers, and having a

florid complexion, blue eyes, and, better than all, an expression of frank good humour and manly honesty of purpose which was irresistibly engaging.

He strode out into the rain, looked up at the overcast sky, which gave not the faintest sign of breaking, then at the road through the mill-gates, now a watercourse. The causeway was not totally under water, so he splashed along that.

The high road was just outside the gates; he crossed it, and struck up a lane towards Mr. Arkwright's house. A little stream had already furrowed up the soil, and was mangling the roadway in a wanton, passionate manner; now rilling down one side of the walk, then capriciously pouring down the middle, and then betaking itself to the other side, where it swilled the causeway. The trees shivered and discharged the water wherewith their leaves were burdened, in

heavy splashes, on the pavement; the yellow flowers in the hedge were beaten down, and draggled in the dirty water. A drain which crossed the road had burst, and a succession of small fountains was boiling up, loosening the stones and cinders wherewith the way was metalled.

When Hugh had reached a sufficient elevation, he turned and looked back at the valley.

The river had overflowed its banks, and the fields on either side were sheets of water. One of the mills was already surrounded, the roadway towards the Calder bridge was in one place covered, and the valley appeared to contain a chain of lagoons.

Sowden was a small manufacturing town of some four thousand people; it lay up the hill-sides, and ran into the glens which opened into the broad vale of the Calder. The mills were all near the water, and therefore liable

to be flooded, but the dwelling-houses were safe, excepting only those in the "folds" or yards of the mills. Mr. Arkwright's house was not in the town, but outside it, conveniently enough situated, commanding the mill in the valley from the windows, and sufficiently elevated to be free of the smoke.

As Hugh walked on, he saw before him a girl returning from the factory, in her white pinafore, below which showed a dark-purple strip of gown, a tin can swung in her hand, her arms were bare, and a red kerchief over her head was pinned beneath her chin.

The young man soon overtook her.

"You will get wet through, lassie," he said. "Haven't you a shawl to wrap yourself in?"

She looked up shyly at him, and answered in a low voice:

"Nay, sir! one of the others has gotten it."

"Then you did not leave home without some protection this morning?"

"Nay, I'd my shawl; but one of t' lasses has ta'en it, I reckon, for I cannot find it."

"Here, come under this umbrella. You will get drenched, you poor little thing, in this heavy downpour."

"No thank you, sir!"

"Oh! but I insist," said Hugh, good-humouredly. "You do not think I am such a barbarian as to pass you without offering you shelter, when I am as dry as a bone, and you stand a chance of being soaked? There," he extended the umbrella over her. She seemed frightened at being spoken to, and shrank aside.

"Do not be foolish. I do not eat little girls," laughed Hugh, as he slackened his pace to hers.

It was kindly intended, and she submitted, though with evident timidity.

They breasted the hill without speaking.

Presently Hugh observed the little crimson kerchief turned, and a pair of large, soft, brown eyes raised cautiously towards his face, but the moment he turned they dropped again. The young man was of a conversational disposition, and he did not allow the silence to remain much longer unbroken.

"Where do you work, lassie?"

"At Arkwright's."

"At my uncle's!" exclaimed Hugh. "How is it you are so late in leaving? All the other girls have been gone some minutes."

"Please, sir, I have been seeking my shawl."

"What sort of work do you do in the mill?"

"Reeling."

"Do you like it?"

"It's none so dirty as some of t' other work."

"Have you worked long at my uncle's?"

"Three year, come next Whissuntide."

"That is rather an odd manner of fixing the date," said Hugh, "considering that Whitsuntide is movable. However, you reckon by festival bonnets and ribbons."

He saw that the little body at his side was laughing, but she did not answer him.

Hugh had as yet scarcely got a peep at her face, for she held it persistently down; but when they came to the fork in the lanes, she stood still, and raising her head, thanked him for the shelter. Then he saw a sweet oval face, with a clear complexion, bright colour from the exertion of mounting the hill, smooth brown hair just shewing beyond the red handkerchief, the largest and gentlest of hazel eyes, and the smallest and freshest of lips.

The expression of the face was as pure and modest as that of one of Angelico's seraphs,

and the timidity which trembled in the mouth and eyes added an extra charm to the natural beauty of the quiet little face.

There is a peculiar cast of features belonging to the Yorkshire damsels of the hill-country on the eastern slope of Blackstone Edge which has in it something Flemish, something Norse. Unquestionably the dales were early colonized by Scandinavian settlers. Flemings also came over in the middle ages, and established their looms in little villages among the hills. To the mingling of these races we must attribute the tall and sturdy frames of the men, the transparent skins, the bright, pure colour, the somewhat excessive breadth of face of the women. The girls are tall, supple, and graceful, not slim and angular, but with well-rounded forms. In the large towns the race is either different, or has altered its characteristics, for among them colour, height, grace, beauty,—all are

wanting, and the women are square made, stooping, dark-haired, muddy-complexioned, and plain.

The little girl who stood before Hugh was a thorough specimen of the hill lassie of Western Yorkshire, with the inexpressible beauty of a simple, modest spirit, beaming out of every feature with irrepressible loveliness.

"Thank you, sir," she said, lifting her eyes for one moment to Hugh's face. "My road lies yonder," pointing to the left.

"And so does mine," said Hugh; "I am not going home just now, I have a message to take to the watchman."

"Joe Earnshaw?" An expression of distress passed momentarily across her face.

"Yes; do you know him?"

"He lodges wi' us." Then, after a little hesitation, she added: "Please, sir, can I take the message?"

"No," answered Hugh; "I must give it myself, and I am delighted to be able to offer you shelter all the way. Come along, my girl, and do not stand in the rain."

So they followed the lane.

"Is it far to your home?" asked the young man.

"Nay, none so very far. We have to cross t' beck."

"It is a rather lonely lane," said Hugh.

The hedges were high and thick; at intervals trees overshadowed it. In spring, unquestionably, it must have been beautiful, but on a rainy autumn day it was detestable.

On the broad roads dusk had settled down, and in the lane under the trees it was almost dark. The mud was deep, the water standing in puddles. Hugh paced along, and the little girl splashed at his side. Every now and then, with a dash, came the water from the trees upon the umbrella.

"What a dismal lane this is!" said Hugh, again. "So you have to come along this by night alone in winter!"

"There's another road by t' river, but I mostly goes this," answered the girl; "I'm flayed i' t' dark of falling into t' Calder."

The lane descended gradually, and there was a better fall for the water; consequently there was less mud.

"What time do you start of a morning?"

"A quarter-past five," answered the girl.

"On a winter morning it must be dreadful," said Hugh. "How do you manage to wake?"

"There's a little lad lives up t' lane. He's nobut a bairn. He works down Holroyd's coal-pit, and he goes past o' mornings at four o' clock. He's got wooden clogs, and he clatters along t' causeway, singing 'Wait for t' waggon.' Poor bairn! he's flayed o' boggarts and padfoots, and he sings to gie

hissen a bit o' courage. But it wakens us regular."

"Poor little thing!" said Hugh.

"Ay! poor little bairn! Mother says it's shame he should be sent all alone."

"And I think *you* should hardly be allowed to go alone along a dark lane like this, night and morning. Are you never afraid?"

She did not answer, but looked up at him cautiously and timidly. He caught her eye, and smiled; she also smiled a little frightened smile.

"What is the padfoot?" asked Hugh.

"It's a sort o' spirit, they say, like a white dog wi' goggle een."

"Have you ever seen it?"

"Nay. If I were to see it, I should dee. Them that sees t' padfoot are sure to dee—mostly, they says."

"And the boggart, what is that?"

"Nay, I cannot tell."

"I have not asked you your name yet, lassie; will you tell me what they call you?"

"They call me Annis Greenwell."

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

She shook her head. "I've nobut a mother living. Father's dead this many a year."

"So is mine," said the young man, in a sad tone. "It's a bad thing to lose a father, but it is worse to have neither father nor mother."

"Is thy mother dead?" she asked, turning her face full of sympathy towards him.

"Yes, Annis, yes."

"Oh, look there, sir!" she suddenly exclaimed.

He looked. The beck was before him; it had flooded the road, and had swept away the plank which usually served as bridge for the foot passengers. The stream, which in

summer was only a dribble, and in winter but a rivulet, was now a turbulent flood, rushing along discoloured with soil, and spreading over a couple of hundred yards of the roadway; the opening by which it was wont to discharge itself being far too small to allow the great descending body of water to escape. Still, water lay at their feet, a rushing, tumbling current sweeping between the stone blocks which had supported the foot-bridge. There was still water beyond, to a turn of the lane.

"What shall I do! what shall I do!" wailed the girl, deserting the shelter of the umbrella, and running to the margin.

Hugh looked at the flood with no little dismay, measuring its breadth, and speculating on its depth.

"There is no help for it," said he; "I must wade over. Have you a cart at your house which could convey you across?"

Annis shook her head.

"Very well," he said. "Take this umbrella, child, and I will go in."

"Oh, don't! pray don't!" she entreated, catching his sleeve. But he shook her off, and entered. Boots and leggings were no preservative against water now, and it seemed to revel in its supremacy, entering at lace-holes, button-holes — everywhere. Hugh reached the support of the bridge, and sounded the bed of the current with one foot before he ventured into the midst. The depth was not great, and he crossed with ease, the water reaching no higher than his thighs.

Having satisfied himself that it was perfectly feasible to cross, he returned to Annis, who stood on the brink, with heaving bosom and clasped hands.

"Come," he said, "don't be alarmed, little friend; I must carry you over."

But she shrank away in terror.

"I daren't, I daren't!" she gasped.

He assured her that there was not the least danger; that, if she only confided herself to him, he would bear her in safety across. She was resolute for some while, and it was only when she saw that this was her only chance of reaching home that night that she yielded. She cried with fear. Hugh stooped and lifted her lightly in his arms.

"Shut your eyes," he said, cheerfully; "and don't be frightened."

But to close her eyes was an impossibility. They were wide open, gazing with an agony of terror at the current in the middle of the sheet of water. Hugh, as he bore her, felt her trembling against his shoulder, and he noticed the colour leave the cheek, and the light desert the distended iris. Her weight on his arms and clasped fingers was great, and the strain was painful. As he neared

the current her alarm increased, and she threw herself back.

"For heaven's sake!" gasped Hugh, "Annis, sit upright, or I cannot sustain you. Put your arms round me."

She clung to him in her fear, knitting her hands behind his neck, and he felt her little tin can rattle on his back. The water whirled past with tremendous velocity, rushing up his side and washing the girl's feet.

When her feet were immersed a feeble cry escaped her lips, and she clung tighter to her bearer. The little red handkerchief was against his temple, the pale cheek touched his, and the warm breath fanned his face.

As he emerged into stiller water she relaxed her hold, and on his reaching dry land she slipped from his arms.

"You are not made of feathers," he said, laughing; "now come along to your house,

I must deliver my message, and be back, and dried, as soon as possible."

She tripped on at his side, gleefully enough now, with the carmine again in her cheeks, and the light once more in her eyes. She did not speak for some while, but then, all at once, as though she had been revolving in her mind what to say, and had at length decided on a fitting sentence, she observed: "You are very kind."

"Not at all," answered Hugh, promptly; and he added, with great sincerity, "it is a pleasure."

The lane followed the brook. He could see the chimney of the cottage, and the broken walls of the quarry. His walk was now nearly over. Unconsciously his pace lagged. He wished he had further to go with the poor little thing at his side under his umbrella, and he would not have objected to another beck or two. Suddenly an idea struck him.

"How are you going to get to the mill to-morrow?"

"I don't know," she answered, standing still. "I must be at my work, or I'll lose my place."

"You must get Joe Earnshaw to carry you over."

She recoiled with a look of strange horror. She did not answer at first, but after a while she said:

"I cannot, sir. He's at t' miln when we are at home, and when we're bounc home, he goes to t' miln."

"Does no one live near you who could assist you?"

"No, no one."

Hugh hesitated, looked at her, dropped his eyes, and then blurted forth nervously:

"I know what must be done; I must come here to-morrow morning at a quarter-past five, and bear you across."

"No, no," she said vehemently, her brow flushing. "No, sir; it won't do."

"Why not, little girl? The bridge can hardly be set to rights before to-morrow morning, and as far as I can see, it is your only chance of reaching the factory."

"Pray sir——"

"It is simply a matter of common politeness," said Hugh. "I have carried you across in safety once, and I think you need not be afraid, should I venture to do so again, of my letting you fall the second time."

"Oh, no, no! but——"

"Annis, I will be on the spot at the proper time to-morrow morning. If you are not here, I shall go back; if you are here, I shall expect you to trust yourself to me."

He reached the door; the girl opened it, and called her mother. A thin, pale woman came to Hugh Arkwright, and told him

that Joe Earnshaw was out, but that he was sure to return before he went to the mill, as he had not taken with him his greatcoat and lanthorn. She thought he had gone to see the river and canal.

"You look very wet, sir," she said.

"I am wet," he answered. "Who is not wet on a day like this? And I have been drenched in fording the beck."

"Is the water out in the lane?" she asked.

"Ay, and the bridge washed away," answered Hugh. "I had to carry your little girl over, or she would not have reached home to-night."

"You are very good, sir," the woman said. "Won't you step in and dry yoursen?"

"I shall have to get wet again," he answered.

"Let me make you a cup o' tea, it will warm you nicely. Now do, sir," she urged

with true Yorkshire hospitality; "we're nó but poor folks, but may be it will make you comfortable for going home."

Hugh hesitated. He did not wish to be late, the water might rise higher, and it would be very uncomfortable to sit in wet things; moreover, his uncle's tea would be ready on his return. On the other hand, he had not seen the night-watch, to deliver his message.

Undecided what to do, he poked the stones about with the ferule of his umbrella. Then he caught a glimpse of a wistful little face looking at him from behind the mother's shoulder. "Thank you," he said; "I shall be most happy," and he stepped into the cottage.

CHAPTER II.

It was a pleasant little room. The fire shed a ruddy glow over it, giving an air of warmth and comfort, especially grateful after the chill and discomfort without. It was what is called in Yorkshire the house, that is, the downstair room in general domestic use. The walls were covered with a somewhat pretentious blue paper. A large mahogany chest of drawers stood against one wall, a triangular corner-cupboard occupied an angle, and in the recess beside the fire was a cottage piano. Several coloured prints adorned the walls; two white cats on a black ground gamboled in a gilt frame over the door into the back kitchen; Garibaldi, in a red shirt,

hung above the piano; over a black horse-hair sofa was a scriptural subject, in vivid colouring. On the chest of drawers was a case of stuffed sea-birds—mews, gulls, and a tern; and suspended above the fireplace on two crooks was a glass walking-stick, probably intended not for use, but for ornament, and only indifferently fulfilling the object for which it was made.

Mrs. Greenwell had been possessed of this walking-stick for twenty-four years. It had belonged to her father. When she married she brought it to her husband as her jointure. Mr. Greenwell had proved more fragile than the stick; he was gone, but the glass staff remained uninjured.

The fireplace contained a kitchen-range, for this parlour-like room was the place where all the cooking was done. The washing up was carried on in the back kitchen, out of sight.

"Will you take the sofa, Mr. Arkwright?" asked Mrs. Greenwell; and then turning to Annis, she said: "Now sharp wi' t' tea-things, lass."

In less than a minute a clean white cloth was cast over the round oak table, and the girl—her face bright with pleasure—set on it a tray, with glass plates, and china cups and saucers. Then she sat down on a little stool by the fire, holding her knee, whilst her mother made tea, and brought a plate of hot cake out of the oven.

"Shall I cook you a bit o' bacon?" asked Mrs. Greenwell.

"No, thank you, not on any account; I shall do very well," answered Hugh, not a little surprised at the comfort and quality of what he saw. He had been accustomed to the style of living of cotters in his father's country parish, and not to that of the artizans in a manufacturing neighbourhood. Indeed

it would surprise all who know nothing of the home life of the operative in a factory, to see its comfort and refinement. His meals are good and wholesome, his house is comfortable, and his family circle pleasant and cheerful. The mill-stains washed off, the work-clothes cast aside, he composes himself to his newspaper, and his tea or supper, whilst his daughter sings, accompanying herself on the piano.

Annis sat silent, in the glow of the fire, with her eyes meditatively fixed on the coals. She had whipped off her white pinafore, and presented a pretty picture in her purple gown and crimson kerchief, with the light from the flames dancing over her bare arms and glowing face. Hugh's eyes wandered towards her continually. Annis had surrendered to her mother the part of conversing with him, so that Hugh was obliged to talk to Mrs. Greenwell, but that the girl

listened and followed the thread of their conversation was evident from the changes of expression in her countenance; and Hugh marked with pleasure the smiles coming and going in her face, the dimples forming and dying on her cheek, and the light brightening and fading in her eyes, whilst he talked with her mother. What a bonny little lass she is! he thought.

And so he rattled on, talking first on one subject and then on another, for Hugh was never at a loss for matter, drawing out Mrs. Greenwell's experiences of past floods; now relating his own adventures in a boat at Scarborough, which were, however, of a very ordinary type; then discussing the subject of excursions and mill-trips. Having learned that Annis and her mother had been in the summer to Blackpool, and that the girl had been photographed, he of course insisted upon seeing the likeness, and, when

satisfied with the sight of it, protested it bore not the least resemblance to the original. Then he wanted to know whether Annis had not kept the inferior copy herself, and given the best to her sweetheart; whereat the little face at the fire became crimson, and Mrs. Greenwell promptly replied that her girl had no sweetheart, and she hoped never would have one. To which the lassie said not a word.

Then Hugh was treated by the good woman to a drop of real warming cordial, made by herself from herbs, after her grandmother's receipt; this led to a digression on cordials, and a vaunting by Hugh of a special elixir possessed by his aunt, and brought from Germany, the secret of which he promised to obtain, by fair means or foul, and impart to the widow.

Still no Joe Earnshaw arrived, and the evening was waxing late and dark. Hugh

rose, not without considerable reluctance, and asked Mrs. Greenwell to give his uncle's message to the watchman when he came in. This the widow promised to do, and Hugh thanked her for the cup of tea, which, he said, he had most thoroughly enjoyed, and for the cordial, which he declared would enable him to bear up against any weather without taking cold. He shook hands with her and wished her good night. Annis rose from her stool; Hugh did not go up to her, but with a nod bade her farewell.

When he was gone, it seemed as though the brilliancy and warmth of the room was gone too, and that all had become quiet and dull. Annis reseated herself, and resumed her contemplation of the glowing embers, whose light was reflected from her soft, dreamy eyes.

How cheerful his conversation had been; what a palace the poor cottage had seemed

whilst he was there. How kind he appeared —to carry her, like a child, in his arms across the beck!

Then the colour sprang into her brow, and cheek, and bosom. She had clung to him, with her arms laced round his neck, and he must have thought her very forward and impudent.

But then he had bidden her so do; he could not have supported her unless she had thus clasped him. How strong he was; she had felt so secure in his arms. And would he really, he, a gentleman, her master's nephew, come to the stream to bear her across on the morrow? Surely not—and yet, in making the offer, he had looked as though he were in earnest.

But, was it right for her to suffer him to take her up in his arms, and ought she to cling to him so tenaciously? Yet by what other means could she reach the mill?

The way by the river side was at present wholly impracticable. There was but one other girl at the factory accustomed to reeling, and if she were not at her post the overlooker would assuredly be angry, and "call" her, and possibly dismiss her. But perhaps the water would have subsided, and the bridge be put to rights by the morrow.

So she mused, crouching by the fire, with her cheek resting on her hand, and the firelight caressing her face. Sitting thus she dozed off unconsciously, and fell into a dream, in which she thought that she stood on the brink of a raging flood, the sky dark overhead, the horizon lost in scudding vapour, and that she stretched forth her arms with a great longing towards the further bank, which she could not see, with pain and fear in her bosom, crying hot tears. And she thought she caught sight of some one plunging through the tide towards her, saying

cheerily, "I am coming, do not fear!" Then her dream was broken by her mother exclaiming:

"Annis, art thou boune to have any tea, lass?"

And she started from her foolish reverie.

A heavy foot came to the door.

"Here is Joe," said Mrs. Greenwell.

Annis darted from the room, and hurried upstairs.

Now as Hugh walked home, these were his meditations—

"What satisfaction is afforded by the performance of a kind act! Moralists are right when they affirm that a good deed brings its own reward. I feel at this moment a glow within me of inexpressible satisfaction at having been enabled to do a very simple, yet a kindly action. It would be culpable were I to neglect the opportunity afforded me of repeating it to-morrow morning. Had I not

offered the shelter of my umbrella to that nice little girl, I should have reached the brook, and been across it and back, without knowing that she needed to be conveyed over, and then, poor little thing! how she would have cried, what trouble she would have been in, to know how to reach home. Yes, I am thankful I was able to carry her to the other side, and my conscience has been approving ever since. Virtue certainly brings its own reward."

Poor simple Hugh! You are one of the many who are ignorant of the motives about which their actions are wound. Hugh was not the least tired of congratulating himself all the way home.

"There is nothing like being brought up to feel for others, to enter into the wants and troubles of others, that is to say, to be brought up as a gentleman. My father took care to inculcate in me consideration for

others, and I never shall be able to sufficiently thank him. One of these unmannerly fellows here would not have thought of offering his umbrella to a little mill-girl; would not have dreamed of carrying her over a swollen stream. If he had been going the same way, he would have plunged through himself, and given no heed to the distress of a helpless child. And what a loss would have been his! I have a feeling of happiness in my bosom, such as I am powerless to describe. I must set my alarum to awake me at half-past four to-morrow morning."

Mr. Arkwright's house was as pleasantly situated as any in the parish of Sowden. It was half way up the hill, had a grove of beech trees behind it, and in front a square garden which it was his pride to keep well stocked with flowers. This garden was well hedged on either side, and railed from the road with green iron bars overhung with

tea-plants. The house and garden faced south, and were protected from the west winds by a row of plane trees in the hedge, under which, outside his fence, was a way leading to the stable, shared with a twine-spinner, who paced up and down it all day long, whilst a little boy whirled the wheel at the end of the rope-walk. Every rose has its thorn, every sweet its bitter, every advantage its drawback. Mr. Arkwright and his little German wife congratulated themselves on having such a pleasant house, but they were kept in daily irritation by the rattle of the spinner's wheel. The rope-walk was the skeleton in their cupboard. It was near their back premises, and the rapidity with which the beer cask ran dry was attributed to this fact. The spinner was unwed, so was the housemaid. Apricots were supposed to ripen on the coach-house wall, but, as a fact, they were never enjoyed

by the Arkwrights, the stones, well sucked, being invariably found before they had purposed picking them, strewing the pacing-ground in the immediate proximity of the wheel. In vain did Mrs. Arkwright change her servants periodically. The band-spinner, on the disappearance of one maid, promptly transferred his affections to her successor. He was provokingly good-looking, and no Abigail that the little lady could secure was proof against his bushy whiskers and dragoon-like moustache. At every change of boy at the wheel, Mrs. Arkwright's anticipations of a chance being afforded the apricots to ripen were doomed to disappointment. The lads proved as sensible to the attractions of the fruit, as were the servants to the charms of the spinner. The windows of the house commanded a pleasant prospect of the vale of the Calder, and the hills on the opposite side, covered with woods, rising

to moor; the Black Nab, the highest point, attaining an elevation of 1700 feet above the level of the sea. To the west lay the blue ridge of Blackstone Edge. On a clear day Stoodly Pike was visible, with its obelisk erected in commemoration of the Peace of 1815, and which, singularly enough, fell the day that war with Russia was declared. The valley itself bristled with chimneys, which smoked night and day. On Sundays the air was clear, and the beauty of the hills was discernible; on other days it was seen but darkly through a veil of coal smoke. When the wind was from west or north, the smoke rolled down the valley; but when from the opposite directions, it swept up the valley. It only went in two directions, up the Calder dale or down it.

How lovely the scene must have been before the manufactories disfigured the country, the smoke befouled the vegetation, and the dye polluted the river, old people

would relate; but it was the beauty of inanimate nature. If much of that is gone, there is a superadded charm in the influx of life and human activity. The fish no longer dart in the limpid river, basking in its shallows, lurking in its pools, for the river is no longer limpid; a reek of indigo and oil rises from it, nauseating in winter, poisoning in summer. The last trout was caught in 1845, and that tasted too strong of dye to be edible. The wood pigeons no longer coo in the bosky nooks, for the scream of the railway engines, and the discordant whistles and "buzzers" of the mills have scared them away. Yet there is something better deserving admiration in Calder dale now than there was then. There is token of prosperity; there is work for nimble fingers, work for active brains. Intelligence which before lay dormant has been elicited, energy which before was undirected finds now a

legitimate field for exercise; power which before was wasted is now gathered up into a mighty force to drive forward the social regeneration of mankind.

When the trout darted and the pigeons cooed, humanity was sparse; now it teems in dell and on hill side.

In the good old days, when the trout darted and the pigeons cooed, you might have wandered among the rocks and woods without seeing man, woman or child; now you cannot go a hundred yards without lighting on a band of little lasses clattering their cans, and singing in sweet harmony as they tramp home from work; or without meeting a party of sturdy men, joyously laughing, returning to the well-spread table, to the dear "owd lass"

"An' th' little things yammmerin' reawnd."

In the good old days, when the trout darted and the pigeons cooed, mankind here-

about lived a dull life of agricultural toil, with no thoughts above bullocks and sheep, under the despotism of an unsympathizing landlord, in a bondage of body, a bondage of mind, a bondage of soul; with no consciousness of the force existing unelicited in all these poor slaves: now the shackles are broken, and the captives emancipated, and men feel that they are men, can hold up their heads with legitimate pride in prosperity, and in adversity are able to say—

> "Let's ha' no skulking nor sniv'ling,
> Whatever misfortunes befo';
> God bless him that fends for his living,
> An' houds up his yed through it o'!"

In the good old days, when the trout darted and the pigeons cooed, there were few to mate save cold-blooded fish in the river, and silly doves in the wood, whereas now—but on this point I can a tale unfold, if the reader has patience to follow me.

When Hugh Arkwright entered his

uncle's door, he was met in the passage by the German aunt, a small woman with a brown face, lively dark eyes, and hair approaching to black.

"Ach! my dear boy, you are shocking! you are ganz durchnässt. What you call it in English? Oh! you go and alter your clothes immediate. I insist. Look at your boots! they are terrible nass."

"Juicy, you mean, Gretchen," said her husband, looking out of the dining-room door. "Why do you not say it, instead of using your stupid foreign words?"

"Why, Henry, how can you so go on! You have no nice expressions in your language. I know it is not juicy. You are poking fun at me. It is the meat is juicy. and not the habiliments."

"Spell that word, Gretchen, please."

"No, sie sind böshaft! I will not. Go you, boy, and alter the habiliments, and then

you shall have your tea. Geschwind! your uncle is eating of it now, and it is all warm." Then, to the maid of all work, "Sarah Ann! carry the young Herr upstairs——"

"I protest, aunt——"

"You bad fellow! you misunderstand me. You carry, for the gentleman, a jug of hot water to the top of the stairs, and geschwind."

Then she darted back into the dining-room to her husband, and began to scold as she poured him out his tea.

"How can I learn the English tongue, if you teach me all wrong. You teach me the bad words, and people laugh over me. I have no one to inquire of. I will mich belehren lassen of Sarah Ann, and you say I talk the broad Yorkshire, and the Wörterbuch gives me not always the proper expression. I will ask dear Hugh. He is a good fellow, and you are very bad. You always tease me dreadful."

"I badger you, do I?"

"You what, sir! I will give you no sugar unless you tell me what that means."

"What badger?"

"Ach! it is naughty. I will get my Wörterbuch. Stay, you shall have no sugar till I have—How spell? Ach! see; I have it found. Der Dachs. It is a nasty beast. How you say me one nasty beast? Oh! Henry, that too bad; I shall cry."

"Nonsense, Gretchen; it means to worry. to tease, you know!"

"Ach, freilich. Zu plagen, zu quälen! I will look out the German and see if it put badger."

"You will not find it. It is a slang term."

"That is it, you teach me more of the horrid slang than of the right English, and it is too bad. Here is Hugh. I will ever ask him. Nicht wahr!"

And now the stream of her broken English

was directed upon the young man, and to him she flew for information whenever her husband used an obscure word which she suspected of implying something very satirical at her expense. Hugh was generally able to relieve her mind, and he occasionally turned aside a joke of his uncle's which he thought might distress her. Hugh rather questioned the taste of Mr. Arkwright in making the poor little woman the stalking horse of all his witticism, and was not a little wearied with the repetition of the same style of amusement at every meal; but his aunt seemed not to feel it acutely, and to bear all with perfect good nature; though occasionally, when her husband had carried his fun a little too far, she would exhibit symptoms of crying. At this point Mr. Arkwright became conscious that he had exceeded what was courteous and kind, and would change the topic. But the little

woman was sure to revive in a moment, and, not content that the talk should be monopolized by her husband, would venture on some observation, so wide of the subject or so absurd, as to restore the train of badinage. Probably Mr. Arkwright considered this banter a lively means of exhibiting his own humour; it was therefore conducted in society every whit as much as at home. Hugh could not but feel that it exposed his uncle to be regarded as wanting in delicacy.

"Henry, mein lieber, it is so nice to-day."

"Then you are the first to appreciate the weather that I have met with. There is no accounting for taste. You see, Hugh, what we lose by not being foreigners."

"Oh, there now! Sehen sie! Not the weather, it was the band-spinner."

"Halloo! Gretchen, you following in the steps of Rachel, Jane, Susan, and I sus-

pect Sarah Anne, in declaring the moustachioed man of the rope-walk nice. I am jealous."

"This is too bad. You will not listen to what I would say. I wanted to say it was so nice this wet day, for that the band-spinner was not here with his terrible wheel, den ganzen tag—the total day."

"How has Sarah Anne borne up through the twenty-four hours?"

"Oh, she has been shocking cross."

"You should take the poetical view of the rope-making," said Hugh; "for there is romance in that as in everything else." And he quoted Longfellow:—

"Human spiders spin and spin,
Backward down their threads so thin,
Dropping, each, a hempen bulk.
At the end an open door;
Squares of sunshine on the floor
Light the long and dusky lane;
And the whirling of the wheel,
Dull and drowsy makes me feel,
All its spokes are in my brain."

"It won't do, Hugh, a bit," interrupted his practical uncle; "for there is no shed with door and windows here, all goes on in the open air. And I shouldn't mind the wheel so much if it did not conduce to beer, which I have reluctantly to pay for."

"Oh, Henry, the cask is completed!" said the German wife.

"I thought as much. Wet work for the human spider. I can't see what right poets have to bring unpleasant images into their verses, and try to make them go down with the public. It is bad enough to have that man perpetually supping my ale and courting my maids without having him made sentimental by becoming the subject of poetry. Come, change the subject. I cannot bear to think of that rope-walk and the eternal whirr of the hateful wheel."

"But you like the din of the mill," observed Hugh.

"That is quite another thing," answered Mr. Arkwright; "I tell you, young man, I hate being *done*, I cannot endure the humiliation of being swindled. Change the topic."

"I did not see the night watchman, sir," said Hugh.

"No great loss either," remarked Mr. Arkwright, with a grim smile. "He's not an inviting object for the eyes to rest on. You left my message, I suppose."

"Yes, with the woman in whose house he lodges. I did not wait long, as there was no knowing when he would be back, and the mistress seemed perfectly trustworthy."

"That's right enough," said Arkwright; then, turning to his wife, he bade her open the shutters and see whether the rain had ceased. She obeyed. The night was dark as Erebus.

"Open the window, Gretchen."

She threw up the sash, and at once they heard the patter of the drops upon the laurels.

"Confound it," said Arkwright; "there will be a flood indeed before morning. I shall go down to the mill at eleven, and not wait for the watchman."

"Let me go, sir."

"Well, if you like it. Young limbs are more active than old ones; so go and bring me word how things look. If the water does get in, we must wait in patience till it chooses to run away. None can prevent it from coming, or accelerate its departure; but I should like to know if the building is still on terra firma."

"It can hardly leave it, I suppose, uncle," said Hugh, smiling satirically.

"No, but if the water gets to the wool, there'll be the devil to pay and no pitch hot."

"I will go down at eleven."

CHAPTER III.

At eleven Hugh put on again his wet boots, which had been set by the kitchen fire to dry, and which were in consequence warm and steaming, buckled on his waterproof armour, grasped his shield, the Gampish umbrella, and issued forth into the night.

"Stay one bit, Hugh," called his aunt, "you must have die Laterne."

"The what, aunt?"

"The—I know not what you call it—the lighthouse, the thing that gives light, verstehen sie, in the blackness."

"The glow-worm, Hugh," laughed Mr. Arkwright.

"No, thank you, aunt, I can find my way

without the lanthorn, and there is gas at the mill."

Then the door was closed behind him, and he realized the darkness and wretchedness of the night.

Carefully keeping to the causeway, he descended the hill. It is a great convenience in part of the West Riding, that every road, and almost every lane, is provided with a broad flagged footway. The sandstone overlying the coal splits into flags and slates, and is extensively used for laying causeways and for roofing houses.

After that Hugh's eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, he was able to distinguish a few objects. He saw the hedges on either side of the way, and the black trees overhead; but he strained his eyes in vain to make out the river and the mills in the hollow. Here and there a spark among the hills indicated the situation of a

cottage where the inhabitants had not as yet retired for the night, but in the valley reigned complete darkness.

Hugh was surprised at this, for he knew that there were gaslights over the gates of most of the factories. Presently a smile came to his lips: he was passing the spot where he had extended his umbrella to Annis Greenwell a few hours before. The image of her bright little face rose up instantly before his mind's eye, and illumed the darkness of the night to a spirit which was not altogether unaffected by the external gloom; and the return of this vision elicited from Hugh an observation which he had repeated to himself no inconsiderable number of times during the last five hours.

"What a bonny little lass she is!"

"Hugh," said a voice within him; "you are struck by a pretty face."

To which he made answer:

"I! fiddlesticks! I am too practical, too much a man of business to have any romance of that sort. I admire what is beautiful, but only as having taste. I appreciate a mountain scene, a lovely group of flowers, a graceful bird, or a sweet little face with melting brown eyes, and the daintiest possible roses, and hair like spun amber—of course I do, or I should be a barbarian; but struck I am not. Who with natural sense of the beautiful does not listen with pleasure to a pure melody, to the murmur of a brook, to the fluting of the thrush, or to the warbling music of a little damsel's voice, when speaking in her delightful hill-country brogue? Thank heaven, I have my natural instincts in my bosom yet, true and healthful; they are not yet mangled by the horrible machinery of a business life, and tossed into devil's dust. But even beauty," continued Hugh, "is to me nothing without soul, and

that soul pure and limpid as morning dew. I cannot look with complacency on a sculptured and friezed jail-frontal. I turn with disgust from its architectural perfection, for I think of the criminals behind. I should feel small charm in the beauty of the cone of Vesuvius, knowing that within was a sea of unrest and fire. However brilliant may be the red berries in the hedge, they never attract me, because I know them to be poisonous. But I love to look on a graceful Gothic minster, for I know that prayer ascends within. I delight in one of our dear limestone fells, for I am sure no volcanic forces are waiting to rend them and spurt forth desolation. I can gaze with rapture on a wood anemone or a tender speedwell, knowing that there is no deadly virus in their veins; and so I can feast my eyes on a little face which shows through its transparent linaments a simple heart ever fuming

with the incense of devotion, a spirit modest and shy, a soul restful in its quiet trust. This is all practical common sense; there is no romance in this, I hope."

"Now then," to the haunting image: "Fly away you little goose! I have more important objects to which to direct my attention." Then after a minute's pause:

"It is a nice little goose, though."

And so musing, he came upon the high road.

Now he could distinguish the giant mass of the factory before him, black against the dark grey sky. He could see the smoke sweeping along with the ashen clouds. But he could detect no light. Sutherland's mill, a bow-shot off, was also dark. Haigh's further up the valley showed no light, but there were sparkles about that of Kershaw. Then Kershaw's had a fold with windows facing that way. There was no fold of

cottages to his uncle's mill, nor was there to Sutherland's factory, which was new, and not completed in its outbuildings. All those in Haigh's faced inwards. Hugh's eyes were sufficiently accustomed to the dark to be able to see the flooded enclosures. The water, he thought, could not as yet have reached his uncle's manufactory, but of that he could not judge with certainty without going into the yard.

He accordingly crossed the high road, passed the gates, and stood in the enclosure, on one side of which was the warehouse and office, on another various sheds and outbuildings, and in the midst the huge black mass of the mill with its tall chimney.

As one watchman attended to two or more factories, Hugh was not sure whether he would find Earnshaw there or at Sunderland's. He examined the warehouse as well as possible by the dim light, and was satisfied

that the water had not reached it as yet. Then he passed by the factory, splashing through the mire, towards the engine-house, which was on a lower level, and nearer the river. Here the fold was much contracted. There was a well partially uncovered, as he remembered, somewhere near the entrance to the hoist, and to avoid it, he kept close against the outer wall. Abutting on this was a shed, in which the hand-combing was carried on before the invention of machines for accomplishing the work with greater expedition and in an inferior manner. This shed was not locked; it was used as a place for odds and ends. A couple of old combs were kept there, for orders were occasionally given for hand-combed woollen yarn for stockings.

As Hugh cautiously stole by it, running his hand along the wall, he was aware of a noise within.

He stood still, and distinctly heard a peculiar voice of deep bass calibre exclaim, vibrating with passion,

"Annis! Annis Greenwell! Oh, Annis, Annis!"

The blood rushed to Hugh's heart with a jerk.

"From the moment I saw you, I loved you. God! how intensely."

The tones rose and fell with strange weird modulations, and then suddenly breaking off, were interrupted by a soft mournful female voice, saying:

"Indeed, indeed I love you."

Then there was a pause.

And again the deep voice spoke:

"You are dearer to me than life, Annis! I shall go mad!"

Then the female voice:

"You know that I love you."

And this was followed by sobs.

Hugh's head swam. He waited till the sensation of giddiness was passed, and then he sprang to the door, crying out:

"Who is here? I will know."

A figure rushed past him and vanished into the darkness without. But he kept the doorway against the egress of the other.

"Come forward, whoever you are!" he said, in a low tone. "I will not hurt you; but see you I must."

There was no answer.

He waited. He did not hear a sound, save the drip through a leak in the roof upon some straw.

Again he spoke.

"I must know who is here. Come to the door immediately."

He paused once more.

Drip.

"Well!"

Drip.

"I have means of discovering you."

Drip, drip.

He put his hand into his pocket and drew forth his match-box. When he tried to strike a light, he found, by the trembling of his fingers, how great was his agitation.

Drip.

Then the match flared up; he held it high, and looked round. He could see a dangling wool-comb, an empty oil barrel, some broken iron cog-wheels.

A water-drop fell sparkling past. Then the match went out.

He struck another. The yellow flare lighted the dingy walls, illumined the straw truss on the floor, upon which the water dropped. There was a heap of something in one corner, with a black shadow behind it. Out went the match.

Drip.

He crumpled up a letter which he found

in his pocket, struck another match, kindled the paper, and pushed into the corner. There he found an accumulation of sacks. Nothing more. He looked behind the oil cask—there was no one there; he went to another corner—it was piled up with hurdles. No person could possibly be secreted there.

"This is most mysterious," said Hugh, standing in the middle of the place, with the paper smouldering to his fingers. "Ah! I have not looked behind the door."

He moved towards it.

Then there flashed on him from without a circle of intense light.

"Halloo!" was called.

"Are you the watchman?" asked Hugh. "Here. Come and help me. There is some one secreted here. A woman."

"Who are you?"

"I am Mr. Arkwright's nephew. Here, quick; give me the lanthorn."

But this the man refused to do; he turned the blaze full on the young man, dazzling him with the brilliance, then he sent the beam of light round the interior of the shed.

"Very odd," said Hugh. "I could have sworn I heard a woman speaking to a man, in here. The man dashed past me, but the woman certainly did not escape. Direct the light behind the door."

The gleam travelled in the direction indicated, but Hugh could discern no one.

"Have you seen any one pass?" asked he, turning sharply on the watchman.

The man lowered his lanthorn and shook his head. Then, putting his hand to the shade, drew it over the bull's-eye, and totally eclipsed the light.

Hugh could distinguish a middle-sized

man with a broad-brimmed cap, a cloak with high collars, and a muffler.

"Come with me to the bottom of the yard," said the young man; "Mr. Arkwright wants to know whether the water is likely to reach the warehouse."

"I will," answered the man.

Hugh went with him to the river end of the fold. The flood had reached the wall, but had not passed it. It must rise a couple of feet before it could wash the ground-floor of the stores of wool, raw and manufactured.

"That will do," said Hugh; then, after a a few minutes of meditation, he asked: "Where were you three minutes before you came on me?"

"Coming down the fold."

"Then, Earnshaw, you must have seen if any one had run out of the mill-yard; did any one pass you?"

"No."

"Come, open your lanthorn. You go round that way, and I will go round the other. Call me if you see any one."

The watchman obeyed. Hugh saw the ball of fire travel slowly along the mill-wall. He followed the opposite wall, but saw no signs of living being.

"Good heaven!" he exclaimed, with a start. "He may have fallen down the well when he dashed out of the door—Earnshaw!"

"Yes, sir."

"Have you a bit of string? He may have tumbled down the well. Your lanthorn, please."

Earnshaw, however, instead of giving it him, knelt on the edge of the well, and sent the light down it. The water was not four feet from the surface. A piece of wood floated in it, nothing else.

"This is most extraordinary."

Then, as he turned to go, he said to the watchman:

"By the way, how is it that there is no gas burning?"

"Water's got into the pipes," he answered.

"And mind, if the water enters the fold, come to the house and rouse us."

As he spoke, a piercing scream rang down the valley, from the steam-call of one of the mills further up the river.

"Hark!"

It was answered by a roaring, vibrating buzzer from a nearer mill.

"Good God!" cried Hugh. "What is the matter?"

Then there followed a rumbling, bubbling, all-pervading sound, heard through the feet, for the ears were deafened with the alarums from the mills.

A roar. A spout of water rushing up

into the black air above the mill-wall, illumined by the light of the watchman's lanthorn as he flashed it in that direction.

"Run for life!" burst from the man, as he fled up the hill through the mill-gates.

Hugh heard a crash, then a furious rush, felt water swirl about his feet, started forward, and was in safety upon the high road.

"There's a reservoir burst," said Earnshaw.

"You run to Sutherland, and I will go to my uncle!" exclaimed Hugh. "There's not a moment to be lost."

"No," said the watchman; "but nobody can do nought."

Hugh dashed up the lane, stumbling and picking himself up again, his face on fire, the discordant screams and roarings of the mill-calls reverberating through the valley, yet not obscuring the mighty growl of the

descending flood. Then the church-bells clashed forth, pealed backwards, and the sharp, cutting note of the steel bell at Haigh's mill added to the clamour. Some half-dressed men plunged down the lane past Hugh, asking if there was fire.

"No; water. A reservoir has burst."

"By Goll! it's a bad job for them i' t' folds and by t' water side," observed one as he dashed away.

"So it is," thought Hugh, redoubling his pace. His mind flashed to the Greenwells' cottage. It stood in a peculiarly exposed position, just above where the beck flowed into the river. "Heaven help them!" he gasped. "The flood will sweep the house, to a certainty."

He found his uncle already aware that something unusual had taken place. Hugh briefly explained to him what had happened.

"Run down to the mill, uncle," he said;

"I will be there presently, though I fear nothing can be done." And he rushed away from the house, turned to the left, and made for the cottage in the sand-pit.

He was soon brought to a standstill by the water. It was far higher than when he had traversed it before. Now the dell was half full of an eddying lake of backwater. It was perfectly impossible to pass. Hugh stood in perplexity at the margin.

The night had gradually lightened, for the moon had risen; but it was obscured by the dense vapours which crept over the sky, discharging their contents on the soaked earth. Lighter it was, however, and Hugh was thankful for it; he could see the steely reflection of the sky in the water. Then he heard a cry from where he believed the cottage to stand.

"I am coming," he answered, at the top of his voice.

He broke through the hedge, crossed a field, burst through another hedge, coursed over a meadow, then over a lately reaped cornfield, up the dell, till he reached the limits to which the backwater extended. A little higher, into a field path and cartway, which descended to the stream. Then he pulled off his Inverness cloak, threw it over his shoulders, and waded across the brook. It reached above his knees. He had expected to find it deeper, but he was above the point where it was affected by the river. He grappled with a fence of quickwood, and forced a way through; he traversed a scattered copse, came out upon the lane above the cottage, ran down it, his breath whistling through his teeth, his pulse throbbing furiously, the perspiration pouring from his face.

Once more he heard a cry for help. He had not power of voice to answer, and he would

not relax his pace to attempt a reply. His feet splashed into the water. He saw it occupying the whole lane, and extending through the fields, quivering, leaping, washing towards him in miniature waves, charged with straw and sticks, then retreating, as though sucked away, only to sweep forward again with greater impetuosity. It was doubtful whether he could reach the door. If he went along the top of the hill which spurred out towards the river and terminated in the sand-quarry in which was built the cottage, he would be within call of the back windows, if there were any, but he would be severed by a gulf from those who required his aid.

He would venture towards the front. He could not as yet see the house, as it was concealed from him by a turn in the lane.

He strode into the water, keeping by the hedge, to which he clung as the current

rushed and spun about him. At every pace the water rose higher, and it was over his waist when he reached the wall which severed the garden from the road. To the top of this he climbed; and standing on it, had the cottage before him. The garden was wholly submerged, the lower rooms were flooded, and the wavelets were plashing half-way up the doorposts. He could distinguish a figure at the bedroom window. He cried:

"Mrs. Greenwell!"

"Help, help!" she screamed.

"Is Annis with you?"

"Oh, yes! Do save us."

"I am coming," he shouted, joyously, plunging off the wall into the turbid water.

An anxious fear had oppressed him since he had left the mill. He could not account for the strange female voice he had heard in the combing-shed. It was not like the tones of

Annis, yet the male voice had uttered her name. Could little Annis have been there? he had asked; and he had replied, Impossible: how could she have been at the mill at such an hour, and with the flooded beck to traverse? Yet he was not satisfied. An unrest had filled his heart, till he had heard Mrs. Greenwell's answer, and then it vanished instantaneously. On he went, calling cheerily to the woman at intervals, and bidding her have no fear.

Then suddenly she withdrew her head and spoke to the girl. Hugh thought he heard her say:

"Annis! it is young Mr. Arkwright."

And immediately a small face looked out eagerly.

Hugh waved his hand and nodded. But he could not distinguish the girl's features, for the night was too dark.

The water rose to his breast, and he found

it difficult to keep his footing. The side of the house was towards the river, and waves continually rushed against it, and poured over the garden, dashing Hugh backward, and several times nearly carrying him off his feet. There was a drying-pole not far from the door. He made towards it, and clung to it. As he was beaten back, an anxious cry escaped the lips of the trembling women; the moment Hugh recovered himself he called to them not to lose courage, as he would be with them very shortly.

From the pole to the cottage wall was a line on which clothes were wont to be hung. It was not strong, but it was sufficient to steady the young man as he made for the door. For a while he lost the ground, and then struck out, holding with his right hand to the rope, but he found it again directly, and, in a moment after, was on the door-

step. The door itself had given way before the violence of the first wave that had rushed against it, and it was washing about in the room.

"Have you a light?" asked Hugh.

Mother and daughter conversed hurriedly.

"Why, mother, of course we have. There's t' leet we went to bed wi'. And we niver thowt on't till this minute."

Then they struck a lucifer, and the candle was lighted.

"It's nobut a small end, and it win't last ower long," said Annis. "I'll hold it at t'head o' stairs."

The girl descended a few steps, as far as the water would permit, and allowed the gleam of the candle to lighten the "house." Hugh made towards her, thrusting the floating door, chairs and tables aside. It was a strange scene. The brown water was above the fireplace, swirling about, rushing in and

out at the open doorway and shivered window glass, the floating furniture clashing and jumbling together, the ripples dancing up the gay blue papered walls, whilst the white cats played, unconcernedly, on the black ground in their gilt frame over the kitchen-door, and Garibaldi stood unmoved above a piano which was dancing, and the sea-birds were perched, high and dry, on the chest of drawers; and, on the stairs, bent a fawn-like figure in purple, with pale face and large shining eyes, and a wealth of glowing, straying hair about her head and white neck, holding a light which was reflected in twinkles on the dancing water.

"Ask your mother if there is anything I can bring up from this room,—anything of special value," said Hugh; "but don't take the light away. I must keep off me these lumbering things that wash about."

Annis repeated Hugh's question.

"Oh yes, sir!" called the widow from the head of the stairs. "Can you, do you think, save t' glass walking-stick?"

"Well," answered Hugh, "I think it cannot hurt where it is, and I may break it in bringing it to you."

"You know best, sir; but I wouldn't lose it for owt."

"Here are the birds. Annis, put out your hands."

So saying, he removed the cases of stuffed mews, guillemots, and terns from the drawers, and gave them to the girl, who handed them to her mother. Then he removed the perishable articles from the chimneypiece, and extracted the upper drawers, which had not been submerged, from the mahogany chest. He unhooked the pictures, and, seeing that the good lady would not be happy unless the walking-stick were placed in security,

he brought it to her, and it was received by her rapturously, and transported to the bed. At the same time Hugh ascended the stairs.

"Give me your hand, little friend, to help me," he said. Annis set the candlestick at her feet, and stretched forth her arms, supposing that he really needed help. He caught the little hands in his own, and held them, lifting his eyes to her large full orbs. Then the rich crimson rose to the pale cheeks once more, and the bosom fluttered, and the lips quivered.

"Annis!" said Mrs. Greenwell, returning from having deposited the precious glass stick on the bed.

"Yes, mother," answered the girl, nervously endeavouring to draw her hands from those which clasped them, and fly upstairs.

Then—by whom effected, I cannot tell—

over went the candle, and soused into the water.

"There now!" cried Mrs. Greenwell.

"There!" said Hugh, giving a little squeeze to the slender fingers as they slipped away.

CHAPTER IV.

Hugh took refuge from the water in the upper room with Annis and her mother.

The cottage was very small. It consisted of a downstair room and back kitchen, and two bedrooms upstairs. There was a little landing at the head of the stairs, with a door opening into the chamber occupied by the two women, which chamber had a window to the front. Another door gave admission to the room let to Joe Earnshaw, the watchman. It was above the back kitchen; it did not command the back yard and the sand-rock, but had a small window to the side facing the river. It was considerably smaller than the front chamber.

Hugh went into it, to look out towards the descending flood. He could distinguish a sheet of glistening water, reflecting the pallid light from above. Far away on a distant hill-side were some sparks, and he could discern a factory, like a large hulk at sea. He listened at the window, but could hear nothing. Every mill-whistle was hushed; the church bells no longer rang; no voices were to be heard calling. The only sound that met his ear was the dull monotonous wash of the flood, and the dashing of the water against the walls. Once a baulk was driven with violence against the side of the house; at another time, a harsh grating attracted his attention, and proved, on examination, to arise from a torn-up fragment of pasture-fence which had lodged against the house, and which rose and fell with the waves, scraping the wall as it did so. The young man heard a plaintive mew

behind him, and, turning to look whence it arose, noticed a white kitten on the watchman's bed, waking from sleep and stretching itself.

He shut the window, and returned to the women in their room. They were seated in silence, Mrs. Greenwell on the bed, guarding the cherished stick of glass, Annis on a chair, with her hands folded on her lap.

"I wish you had not upset the candle, lassie," said Hugh.

"Please, sir, I thought it was you," she answered.

"Oh dear! oh dear!" wailed her mother. "We shall all be drownded! What shall we do?"

"We must wait till the water subsides a little," said the young man; "and then I shall be able to carry you to dry land. You can trust me to do that, can you not,—little friend?" turning to the girl.

"Yes," Annis replied, hanging her head.

"You must assure your mother that I am very strong, and that my arms are stout, and that I can carry her in perfect safety if she remains still, and does not scream and fling herself about."

"Oh, I wish t' water would sipe away," moaned the widow. "I fear t' world's coming to an end. And that'll be a bad job for us. I only bought a pig last week, and I thowt to ha' fattened 'un for Christmas, but it's just so much brass thrown i' t' muck, if t' world's end is come. Tha'll niver taste none on it, lass! Thee niver will."

"Eh, mother! I reckon t' pig is drownded."

"You may be sure of that," said Hugh. "Probably, the poor thing has been carried down the river by this time."

"Eh, it's a bad job!" said Mrs. Greenwell. "I wish I'd niver paid for 't, as I'll none get ony good out on't." Then, after

a pause, she said, "Annis, lass, thou knows t' pig may be i' t' pig-hoile yet, and if she's nobut drownded, we mun boil her."

"Nay, mother, she gone down wi' t' flood. He says so."

"Poor pig!" said the good woman, with a sigh. "It's sad to think she's gone t' road o' all flesh. Ah weel! we mun all go when t' Lord calls us." After which pious expression the widow relapsed into silence.

Hugh stood by the window, leaning against the side, looking out. The sash was up, and the cold and damp night air blew in. Now that the exertion of running and wading was over, he felt the chill of the wet clothes clinging to him, and gave an involuntary shiver. Annis looked up at him, and said in a soft, compassionating tone of voice:

"You're very cold, sir! You've gotten so wet. Eh, it's a pity!"

"There's no help for it," he answered her.

"But there's no call for t' window to be open," she said; "and I'll get thee t' blanket to lap about thee, and keep out cold."

She brought him one, and he wound it round him. It was the best thing he could do, preventing the evaporation from his clothes. His hand was on the back of her chair, he caught one of the smooth straying locks and twined it round his finger. It seemed to bind the poor little thing to him, and a glow passed from the slip of hair up his arm, and struck warmth to his heart. She did not know that his fingers held her fast, for she was very still, with her hand doubled and her chin upon the back of it. None of the three spoke for some while. Mrs. Greenwell was enduring great searchings of heart, on the score of the pig. Annis was deep in a waking dream,—so was Hugh.

Without, the water moaned; in the lower room it slapped and jolted the floating furniture. The kitten mewed at the door to attract notice, and induce some one to coax it. Suddenly, there was a report like a pistol, which made all three start, and which brought the cat's entreaties to an end.

"What is it? Oh dear!" gasped the widow.

"I hope it is nothing giving way," said Hugh, anxiously. "Perhaps it was only a piece of timber dashed against the wall."

"It sounded in t' house," said Annis.

"Ay, over my head and under my foot, all to once."

"There is nothing to be done, but to wait in patience," Hugh observed. "We certainly cannot escape from here till day dawns, and I hope then the water will subside."

"I think it's lightening a bit now," said Annis.

"I think so, too," responded her mother; "maybe day's coming."

"Indeed, I hope so," said Hugh, fervently.

"I fancy I can see yond bit o' wall," put in Mrs. Greenwell; "I couldn't afore. And it's lightsomer over t' hill-top, I can mak' out trees, all sharp like."

"Yes," said Hugh, "the day is going to break. Look out, Annis!" and he let go the lock of hair. She sprang to her feet, and turned to the window.

At that instant, a ragged line of grey light flashed down the opposite wall, accompanied by a groaning and crackling, snapping, and heaving and sinking of the floor; then a crash. Hugh caught the little girl to him, and threw the blanket over her head, as a rush of slates, plaster and laths shot down.

The gash widened rapidly, and in a moment a great surface of night sky,

smitten with the grey of dawn, appeared where there had been dark wall. A cloud of dust whirled around, water splashed into the room, the drops pattering over the bed and striking into the young man's face. A shrill cry of terror was uttered by the kitten, crouched in a corner, its eyes flashing green light.

Then down rushed a stone slate from the roof, and slapped the water. A quiet moment.

Then another slate fell, and struck the floor, bounded off and plashed into the flood.

Another still moment, with the rush of the water alone breaking it. Then a broad flake of plaster dropped into the middle of the room, throwing up dust, and filling Hugh's nostrils with an odour of lime.

A pause once more.

And then a beam slid through the ceiling, halted at an acute angle, then swept round

like a great compass-arm, smote the floor, and remained stationary, erect. Nothing further fell.

A frightened little body had been clinging frantically to Hugh, with her head against a breast which throbbed with anxiety; an arm was around her, to ward from her all danger. Now Hugh released her.

"Oh! what is it?" she asked.

"Part of the wall towards the river has fallen," he replied. "It has been undermined, and the foundations have given way."

"Will more go?"

"I think not. That angle of the house was directly opposed to the stream. You are not hurt at all, are you, Annis?"

"No, no sir. Thank you so for protecting of me. But—mother!"

Mrs. Greenwell did not answer. The bed

was distinctly emphasized against the horizon, as seen through the gap. The widow was not sitting up, but fallen back upon it.

"Mother—mother, dear!" cried the girl, piteously; and in a moment she leaned over her.

The poor woman was lying with her head back and her arms stretched out; one hand clasped the glass walking-stick. A stone slate from the roof lay by her. It had struck her in falling, and she was senseless. The walking-stick was shivered to fragments.

Annis cast herself on her mother with a wail of agony, putting her arms about her, straining her to her bosom, kissing her, and pleading with her to awake and open her eyes, and speak.

"Annis! my little girl," said Hugh, "loosen your hold one moment. Let me see your mother; perhaps she is only

stunned. There, fill a mug with water. Quick! we may bring her round."

"Oh, mother, mother!" cried the girl.

"Do run for water. There is a mug on that wash-stand. Be quick, Annis!"

Then she obeyed; she took the vessel, and filled it from the jug, brought it to Hugh, and stood beside him sobbing whilst he splashed the water over the poor woman's face.

"She is dead," said the girl.

"I do not think it. You should not suppose the worst. I fancy she is only stunned. Hark!"

Both heard a shout; it was a loud, ringing voice from the top of the sand-hill. Unfortunately no window opened that way; but Hugh, relinquishing his attention to the insensible woman, ran to the gap in the wall, and called:

"Help! help!"

Then the voice roared again:

"Annis!"

"Yes!" called Hugh, in reply. "Help for a sick woman, and quick about it: the house is falling!"

"Annis!"

"Yes!" cried the girl, starting forward to the fissure. "I am here. Oh, Joe! mother's dying."

"Who is with you?" asked the loud, vibrating voice.

"Mother. Mother's nigh dead."

"Who else? There was a man spoke."

Annis hesitated, and looked at Hugh; then her eyes fell.

"There's a man there. Who is it?" again, with a bellow like a bull.

"Only Mr. Hugh Arkwright," Annis cried, shrilly.

"Then," boomed the voice, "Damnation! let him save you."

And they heard no more.

"Joe, Joe!" in a note of piercing agony.

No answer.

"Joe, help me! help mother!"

No answer.

She cried once or twice again; but no one replied, and she returned to the bedside, on which lay the poor insensible form; and on that she now lavished all her care.

The dawn brightened. The clouds became as wool; a sickly pallor stole over the landscape. The troublous waters reflected it, showing like a sea of mercury. Trees became black patches against the horizon. The factories began to cast inky shadows over the flood, and gleams to appear at their windows, the light from those to the east striking through those opposed to them. No smoke lumbered away from the tall chimneys.

A haystack drifted down the river, bobbing lurching to one side, then to the other,

and then passing beyond the range of vision. Then a dead cow floated past; and after it a fleet of oil-casks. Aloft, a flight of rooks were tracing strange patterns against the grey cloud, cawing with delight, for the overflow promised them rare pickings.

Next, a strip of cloud lost its ashen hue and turned a muddy brown; presently the brown reddened, and there was a bank of rust-coloured vapour towards the east. A purer, crisper air began to waft in at the chasm, and to gather force. The clouds moved faster; they took outline and shape, but shape of a ragged description, and an outline ever breaking up and re-forming. No rain fell now. All at once the canopy of mist was cross-chopped into little fleecy packs, then a rent appeared, and a glimpse of very cold blue showed and was brushed over again, as though it had been a blot and was to be smudged out for ever. Then came

a sulphur powdering, and then, with a flash, a beam of sun went, as a seraph bearing a message of joy from the throne of God, flying over the hill, transmuting the flood of mercury to a sea of gold, making every bush and tree, however mean by nature, glorious by Grace; turning the drops which the breeze dashed from their leaves into showers of flame, leaping in at the gaping fissure in the cottage wall, and painting its walls yellow, and carpeting its floor with primrose; breaking into prismatic colours in the water-drops which trickled over the inanimate body, bringing light into the dim eyes, a flush to the pallid cheek, even crumbling into rays in the splintered glass of the walking-stick, then sinking into the bosoms of the two anxious watchers, casting out fear and doubt, and springing up in a fountain of hope, scattering its tokens from eye, and lip, and brow, and cheek.

"A boat! a boat!" shouted Hugh, starting to the gap.

"Hoy there!" from over the water.

"Help!" called the young man, catching up Annis's crimson kerchief, which lay on a chair near at hand, and waving it.

"Right!"

Then the boat came on towards the cottage slowly, pushing past beams and rails, and fragments of broken cattle-sheds, which encumbered the backwater. The rowers thrust off the carcass of a drowned cow, but it swung round and came towards them again. They drove it off with a punting pole, and it swam a little way, and then floated to the boat from an opposite side.

There was a broken wall to be crossed. Several places had to be tried, and one abandoned after another, till the gate was found, and then the boat pushed through.

"How many are you there?" asked a voice from the stern.

"Three!" shouted Hugh. "But one is insensible."

"Why, good Heavens! it is Hugh!" exclaimed the man in the bows—he was Mr. Arkwright. "How the deuce comes he here?"

With some difficulty the boat—it was a mere tub—was brought alongside of the cottage, floating just below where the wall had fallen. The pile of rubbish stood out of the water, and the joists of the flooring had declined, so as to make it easy to descend to the fallen stones, and then step into the boat.

Hugh carefully assisted the girl down to the heap, then lifted her into the arms of one of the men, who deposited her on a seat; then Mr. Arkwright jumped out of the boat, and another man followed him.

With some little trouble, and with great care, they bore Mrs. Greenwell down. The motion probably did her good, for she opened her eyes, and tried to sit up. They laid her on some clothes in the boat, with her head in Annis's lap, and then pushed off.

CHAPTER V.

The whole of Sowden, and not Sowden only, but the entire Vale of the Calder, was in excitement early that morning. Many houses had been wrecked, much property damaged; it was feared that not a few lives had been lost. Whole families were without shelter, save such as was afforded by the charity of those whose homes had escaped; their furniture was gone seaward, their clothes were submerged in the turbid water, their little ornamental knick-knacks had vanished for ever, deep buried in an alluvial deposit, to be fossilized for the admiration of remote ages. It was ascertained that the great reservoir of Mitholm-

royd had given way during the night. This reservoir supplied one of the secondary manufacturing towns of the West Riding with pure water, the drainage from the fells and scars, and was formed by drawing a strong wall as a dam across a glen, to pond back the streams. The water thus collected formed a broad, picturesque sheet, a favourite visiting place for excursionists, situated among the whin-covered hills, which it reflected like a mirror, and within an easy walk of a railway station. On Saturdays this pond, or lake, as advertisements of excursion trains termed it, was a scene of great animation. Crowds of mill-people arrived by afternoon trains, in overflowing spirits, determined on thoroughly enjoying themselves. Stalls of fruit and "spice" vendors occupied the side of the lake near the embankment, and a thriving trade in lemon-drops, kali, almond rock, sour apples,

and cherries was carried on. Little cock-boats were rowed over the pond by loudly laughing boys and young men, who had paid sixpence each for the privilege of paddling about the pond for an hour—a penny for ten minutes being the market value of this sport. Mauve ribbons, magenta skirts, Humboldt parasols were scattered over the barren fells, the girls running after one another through the heather and whin, and scrambling to the top of the hill, to get a sight of the towers of York Minster, which were supposed to be visible thence on a clear day. Or, lads and lasses assembled on the turf before the boat-house, for the games of Jolly Milner and Sally Water, which were played with unflagging vigour, hour by hour, to the quaint and pretty old tunes accompanying the conventional rhymes, sung by many voices full of rich tone, such as is heard nowhere but in the West Riding.

Now this lake is no more. Yesterday afternoon a rent was observed in the wall which restrained the water, but proper attention was not paid to it. The keeper of the lock sent a little boy to look after the engineer, but the engineer was in a condition of beer, and thought there was no danger to be apprehended; so the lock-keeper, having shifted the responsibility to other shoulders, ate, drank, and was merry. Before nightfall he went again to the embankment, and looked at the crack. It had not extended further; water was dribbling through it in some places; in one, a spirt shot out. Rain was falling very heavily. The pond-keeper thought it was unpleasantly moist without. He eased the lock a bit, to allow more surface water to escape, observed to himself that it was going to be a —— night, the expletive not being fit to render otherwise than with a hiero-

glyphic blank; then he returned to his house on the edge of the embankment, and remarked to his wife, that "he'd see to the wall being mended up a bit i' t' mornin', but he'd be damned if he'd do ought that night;" so he had his sup of ale, his meat and bread, whiffed his pipe, went to bed, and woke up in eternity.

The embankment gave way at once, and a mighty volume of water swept down the glen, rooting up trees, brushing away homesteads, burying here, grubbing up there, building a cairn of fragments in one place, pulling down houses in another. In one great wave it burst out of the dale into the Valley of the Calder. A public-house, called the "Horse and Jockey," situated where the beck flowed into the river, vanished from the face of the earth, not one stone being left upon another. The innkeeper's body was never found; his child's

cradle, but not the child, lodged in the branches of a tree which stood its ground, whilst the flowers at its feet disappeared. The beer-casks floated ashore some miles down, were never claimed, and were tapped and drunk dry by some broken teetotalers. The sign of Horse and Jockey came to land at Goole, uninjured; it was the most worthless article the house had possessed. The sentient, soul-possessing man was destroyed; the painted jockey was preserved.

There was a row of spic and span new cottages, lately erected on money borrowed from a Halifax building society, a little further down the river, of red brick, with stone heads to doors and windows; the flood carried away three out of the four.

In the first lived a respectable wool-picker, with wife and children, joined Wesleyans; he and wife and children were swept from life in a moment, to the no small satisfaction,

of course mingled with acute grief, of the chapel preacher: satisfaction, in that he was supplied with a subject upon which to become impressive next Sunday evening; grief, inasmuch as he had lost a pew-holder.

In the second lived a widow, who sold "spice," that is to say, sweets, together with sundry articles in the grocery line: a mighty woman, very rotund, very red, with a laugh and a joke for every one; a useful woman to wives in their confinement, and to young people with tooth-ache and children with bowel complaint. The wives she assisted as midwife, the young folk she relieved with black bottle, the children were soothed with peppermint drops. Now she was gone down the river, her sweets dissolved, her bottles broken, her drops dispersed, her experience of confinements lost to earth. Away she had gone, floundering and spluttering in the water, till her lungs

were filled with the fluid she involuntarily imbibed, and then she sank, and was caught and dragged by some sunken tree stumps.

In the third resided a musical shoemaker, a man with one love, and that love his bass-viol. A wiry, solemn man, greatly in request for all concerts, able to conduct a band, or take almost any instrument himself, but loving most a viol. Of him a tale was told, how he was returning through a pasture one day in which was a furious bull, who, seeing old David with his red bag, made at him. Cobbler David did not fly; that would not comport with his dignity, and the instrument might be injured by a precipitate retreat over the hedge. The bull bellowed, and came on with lowered horn. "Steady," soliloquized the musician; "I reckon that were double B nat'ral." Again the bull bellowed.

"I fancy it were B," said David again.

"But I'll mak' sewer," and opening his bag, he extracted the bass-viol, set it down, and drawing his bow across the vibrating string, produced a sound as full of volume and of the same pitch as the tone of the infuriated beast.

"I thowt I were reet," said the cobbler, with a grim smile.

At the sound from the viol the bull stood still, raised his head, glowered at the extraordinary object before him, turned tail, and fled.

Now poor David was gone, and grit and dirt had been washed into the sound-case of the cherished instrument. That was a sad night for the musicians of the neighbourhood.

In the last cottage of the row lived a drunken, good-for-nothing fellow who did odd jobs of work, sold oranges, "lead," coals, carted soil; a fellow who had driven his

own poor wife, with her bairns, from the house, and lived with a fat prostitute as drunken as himself. This house and those within were spared!

"They might ha' been drownded, and nobody would ha' given a thowt on't," was the general verdict on this dispensation of Providence; "it's a pity!"

After sunrise the water rapidly sank in the river, but the valley remained full of pools. Every field was overflowing, and the water could only escape slowly through the drains. It was the same with the mill-folds. The houses therein remained immersed for days. About Sowden there had been no loss of life, it was ascertained; those who had perished had lived many miles further up the valley. But though none had been drowned, many were homeless. Some poor folk had escaped from their homes as the flood first burst on them. Others had taken refuge in

their bedrooms, and looked out of their windows, calling to the men who went about in boats to assist them ashore. Several had found means of saving their pigs, and had carried them upstairs. Where the water was not too deep, lads waded about collecting various articles which the flood had brought down. A number of floating oranges had lodged in a corner, and were greedily secured and sucked. One man ran about displaying a lace-up lady's boot which had been carried into his kitchen, and inquiring whether any one had seen the fellow. The rowers in a boat secured a bottle of rum, drank it off, and cast the empty bottle into the water again. There was much merriment. Yorkshire folk must laugh, whatever happens, and jokes were bandied to and fro between those who rowed or waded and those who were prisoners in their upper chambers. A very tall man, known as Flay-crow (scare-

crow) Tom, whose house was submerged, strode through the water carrying his short fat wife in his arms, but just as he reached a wall, he sank into a hole, and let her go. She scrambled upon the wall, laughing and chattering, and not very wet, and pulled the Flay-crow out, rating him well, but good-humouredly, whilst a crowd on dry land cheered her.

"He's no better nor a great buffle-hee-ad!" she said to them in return.

In a little one-story cot, inhabited by a lone woman, very old, a maker and seller of oat-cake, the poor thing was discovered in her night-gear, seated upon a small round tea-table, with her chin on her knees, quaking with cold and fear, and the table wobbling under her. This position she had occupied for ten hours before she was rescued, and when taken off, the tea-table relieved of her weight, rose, turned over, and floated. One

sturdy woman had carried her bedridden husband on her shoulders out of the house, through the water, and up the hill to a cottage, in which he and she were kindly received. That had been on the rising of the flood; now she was tramping through the water driving in at the door, examining the premises, and seeing what amount of damage had been done.

The pariahs of society were alive to their opportunities, and equal to the occasion; and were descending the stream claiming everything of value that was found as having belonged to themselves. In many cases these claims were allowed; in others the finder of some article, rather than surrender it to a man whom he suspected, would cast it again into the river, and bid him go further to obtain it.

A catastrophe elicits good and evil; it draws out hidden virtues and it manifests

unsuspected vice. Fraud, theft, lying, selfishness were exhibited on this occasion. Deserted houses were entered and robbed; assistance was refused unless paid for exorbitantly; goods known to belong to neighbours were taken possession of, and sworn to as having been the property of the finder for weeks or months. But, on the other hand, an amount of kindliness, unselfishness, and sympathy was manifested for the sufferers which went no little way towards consoling them for their losses. The homeless were received into the houses of those who had homes unvisited by misfortune. People vied with one another in showing attention to those who were deprived of all. They were clothed, and fed, and sheltered, and warmed, and men spent their time in helping the helpless, and in protecting their goods, without looking for repayment.

Mr. Arkwright was a man of feeling, and

he insisted on having the poor widow moved to his own house. Mrs. Greenwell had revived sufficiently to look about her, and inquire after the pig, and bewail the broken staff, a fragment of which remained in her hand. The slate had cut and bruised her scalp. Annis and one of the boatmen bound a handkerchief round her head, and a shutter having been found, the widow was laid on it, and borne up the hill by the men, whilst her daughter walked at her side.

Mrs. Arkwright was at the garden-gate. She had been desiring to assist some one of the sufferers, and now her delight at having the opportunity of lavishing her sympathy and care on one who was not only outcast, but badly hurt, was excessive. Few of the houses round were without some inmates thrust on them by the catastrophe of the night, and now the little German lady was gratified in her most sanguine wishes in

being afforded scope for the display of attentions like her neighbours.

"What the deuce took you to that cottage?" asked Mr. Arkwright of Hugh.

"Humanity," was the prompt reply of his nephew.

"Where did you go, after giving me warning of the flood, boy? I thought you told me you would be with me directly. I expected you all night. There was not much to be done at the mill, except to get the books safe from the reach of the water, but you should have been there."

"So I would have been, my dear uncle, but my assistance was needed for the preservation of life, and I could not well refuse it."

"What took you to that cottage?" again inquired Mr. Arkwright.

"I believe it was presence of mind. You know that you sent me there at half-past six."

"Yes, I know I did; what of that?"

"Well, fortunately—I will rather say providentially—I observed the position of the house, with its angle to the river; and directly I knew that a reservoir had burst, I felt sure that the cottage in question would stand very little chance of escaping destruction. My father, I am thankful to say, always taught me to observe and to think, and I am fortunate in having profited by his instruction."

"There were other houses in equal peril," said his uncle.

"Yes, there were," Hugh answered. "Those, for instance, in the mill-fold; but I knew on them would be directed all care and attention, whereas this house was out of the way, and there were no men near to give help. It really was most fortunate that I went there."

"Humph!"

His uncle seemed partially satisfied with the explanation. Mr. Arkwright had been out all night himself.

"You see, when once I got there, there was no getting away," added Hugh. "I had not the inhumanity to leave a dying woman, and I very much question whether it would have been possible for me to have left. It was bad enough reaching the cottage."

"Change the topic," said Mr. Arkwright. "You are wet through; go and alter your habiliments, as Gretchen would say, or you will be laid up with rheumatic fever."

"Rheumatic fever is a dreadful complaint," observed Hugh.

"Ay," said the millowner, "I believe you, my boy. And the worst is, that it leaves after-effects. It often affects the heart."

"I feel a sort of queer sensation there now," said Hugh.

"Stuff!" laughed his uncle. "It follows, does not precede, the disorder. Go and slip on your dry things, and we'll have some hot toddy to set us right. Be sharp!"

Mrs. Arkwright had in the meanwhile seen her patient into bed, had bustled about the house first after one thing and then another, in the exuberance of her sympathy. The doctor was sent for, cordials were applied, and there was no fear of Mrs. Greenwell suffering for want of attention. If there is one thing a woman revels in, it is having a sick person in the house; if there is one thing, however, that she prefers, it is the having a corpse. Mrs. Arkwright was likely to be gratified in both respects, for the poor widow was doomed not to recover; but of this the lady was not certain now, though flutterings in her bosom told her that it was not impossible. Had her husband given her the choice of a sick woman or a silk dress,

she would have accepted the former; had he offered her a set of diamonds or a decease, she would have enthusiastically elected the latter.

Let no one deem the little German lady unfeeling. She was the impersonification of tender compassion and sympathy. Her own comfort, her health, her leisure she would sacrifice without a moment's regret to her solicitude for another; but there is a certain satisfaction in being enabled to exert the human instincts, in having an object on whom to lavish the sensibilities, in having something to harrow the feelings, which is to most women positive, though unacknowledged, pleasure. A man loves to be placed in a position which shall draw out his resources of mind and body, however exhausting to the mind and wearying to the body. It is precisely the same with the woman, and sick and death beds are the

fields upon which she can best display her powers of sympathy and endurance. What forethought has to be exerted! what protracted watchings! what perpetual cookings! what interminable fidfadding, wearing to the frame and to the spirit! yet gone through with an enthusiasm unabated, because it springs from a consciousness that she is fulfilling her vocation, and moving in the sphere for which she was designed before the creation of all things.

"Ach, die arme liebe Frau, es thut mich herzlich weh!" said Mrs. Arkwright, arranging the sheets round Mrs. Greenwell. "Now there! I do forget, and speak my own tongue. You are shocking bad. You are—freilich. Ah! my ivers!"—Mr. Arkwright had taught her that expression—"You will eat nothing, but you must and you shall. Ver-well, you may stay till the doctor comes, and he shall say. Then we see; you will have to gobble,

gobble! Will you taste eine Brühe, a—what you call it?—a broth of beef? No! Verwell, we shall wait a bit."

Annis stood by her mother's side, very anxious. Mrs. Arkwright directed her attention next to her.

"You poor little lassie! have you had to eat some breakfast? You must," then she summoned Sarah Ann. "You, Sarah! shall see to the Mädchen, and give her something. She is hungry, she is thirsty, I know verwell; and you shall give her a brush and comb, and make her nice and all right."

The servant-girl entered on her employment with delight; took Annis to her room, and let her wash her face and hands, and smooth her hair; then brought her down to the kitchen, and gave her coffee and buttered toast. Annis was not long at her breakfast, for her heart was with her mother, and she felt restless when away from her room.

Sarah Ann talked incessantly, asking more questions than it was possible for the little girl to answer, being anxious to know who she was, what was her age, where she worked, how she liked her work, had she ever thought of going out into service, how her mother had been injured, did she think she was badly hurt, where she lived, was she very frightened when the water came into the house, did it waken her by its noise, or was she awake already, what did she think it was when she heard the noise, did she scream and cry, had she lost much in the flood, were her Sunday clothes spoiled, how many gowns had she, did she like hats or bonnets, flowers or feathers, how was she rescued, was she not very glad, would she like to have the same thing to happen over again? and similar questions, some of which Annis replied to, whilst others she left unanswered.

"You are not going yet," remonstrated

Sarah Anne, when the girl rose to return upstairs; "you've not told me nowt yet. Stay a bit longer. Your mother's all safe, there's Mrs. Arkwright with her, and she'll let ya know if there's owt amiss. Stay, lass, till t' doctor comes—I reckon he'll be here directly." Then she recommenced her string of questions. Sarah Anne knew nothing of the part Hugh had taken in the rescue, and Annis did not think it necessary to inform her.

In a very short while the servant had acquired the following facts, which, as they may be of some interest to the reader, are recorded here.

Annis was seventeen at her last birthday in March; she was the only child of her mother, and had lost her father five years before. She had no kindred of close relationship to her in Sowden, but her mother's brother had a farm in the hills near Keighly.

She had been there one Whitsuntide feast, but had only remained there a few days. She had a cousin in Sowden, "they called him Rhodes," that is to say, in plain English, his surname was Rhodes, whose daughter Martha worked at Arkwright's mill, and was her great friend.

"I know her," said Sarah. "She's a Church Sunday-school teacher; I see her wi' t' barns every Sunday. She's got a black hat wi' a blue ribbin, and a black silk mantilla. Her folks is all Ranters, but she's all for t' Church." How this came about Sarah Anne professed not to know, and she declared she was "fair down capped wi' it."

The information obtained by her touching Annis's wardrobe is calculated to interest lady readers, and as this book will probably have a preponderance of such, it is here inserted by us, professing to be perfectly ignorant of the subject ourselves.

Annis had three gowns. The purple dress she then wore had once been a best, but that was very long ago, and now it was worn for work. She had a second best, a blue Coburg at one shilling and threepence a yard, which she usually wore of an evening at home, and on Saturday afternoons, and on rainy Sundays. Her best gown was of purple French merino, at four shillings a yard; she had had it new last Whitsuntide. On Sarah's inquiring how many breadths there were in her skirts, Annis replied, four; the dressmaker she employed was Miss Hamshaw. She had a white bonnet with a rose in it, and a hat edged with blue velvet, and with a blue feather in it—this had been worn new with the blue dress, but Annis was thinking of altering the trimmings to suit the purple French merino. She had a brown cloak, and a black silk jacket, which latter had been a mantilla, but had been altered. None

of her clothes were likely to have been injured by the wet, as they were in her box, upstairs.

Sarah Anne then inquired whether Annis had taken any precaution against the house being robbed. It would be a pity to have the French merino lost for want of proper care. Would it not be as well to speak to Mr. Arkwright about it, or to Mr. Hugh?

Suddenly Annis looked down.

They might send and see that nothing was taken, or, if the house was in a state of ruin, might have the things transported to a place of security. There was Mr. Hugh coming downstairs; she would tell him about it—she professed to be a little afraid of the master.

So Sarah Anne went into the passage, and begged Hugh to let her speak with him for a moment; as the little girl had told her that her property was exposed to the risk of being stolen. When the young man heard

this, he stepped into the kitchen, and asked Annis what it was she wanted. The girl explained to him that she should like to have all her own and her mother's things placed in safety, and that she thought her cousin Rhodes, in Kirkgate, would take them in, if they could be transported thither. "But," added she, "I don't like to trouble you any more, sir, you have been so kind to mother and me. If John Rhodes could be told about it, I think he'd have us (our) things flitted, but I do na' like to leave mother, to tell him."

"I will see to it, so have no fear," answered Hugh; "put that trouble off your mind. I will either tell Rhodes, or see myself to the transporting of all your goods and chattels."

"You're so very kind," said Annis, mournfully.

"Not a bit," answered Hugh. "I am

only acting in accordance with the dictates of Christian humanity, just as scores of others in Sowden are acting this morning towards those who, like you and your mother, are for a while houseless. So do not fret about troubling me, for trouble there is none; it is our duty to assist one another in misfortune. Why, little girl, if anything were to befall me, I should expect you to exert yourself to help me."

"I would; eh, I would!" she looked up full of intense eagerness.

Hugh smiled.

"Sarah Anne," said he, "I hear the front door bell. I think the doctor is come; show him upstairs at once."

The maid ran out; Annis rose to go, too, but Hugh stopped her.

"Wait a moment, little friend; tell me if there is anything particular in the house that wants to be taken care of. You had

better let me know where any money is, that I may secure it for you."

"Oh, sir," she replied, "i' t' box upstairs, you'll find there's a little brass i' t' left-hand side down at t' bottom, under my clothes. Mother put away a few pounds there. There's none anywhere else."

"Then I will have the box moved, and, indeed, anything that is not injured, as soon as the water is low enough, and some one shall watch the house till then."

"Thank you, sir." Then she hesitated.

"What is it, Annis?"

"Please, sir," she hesitated again.

"Well, speak out, what do you want?"

She lifted her shy, brown eyes to him timidly, and said in a low voice: "Please, Mr. Arkwright, I think you've my red handkerchief; I think I seed you put it by mistake into your pocket, when we were boune to leave t' old house."

Hugh coloured, then laughed.

"Now, Annis," he said, "I think you might let me keep that, as I took care of you and your mother."

"Eh! do you want it, sir? It's nobut a poor cotton handkerchief."

"I should like to have it so much, as a little remembrance of the adventures of last night."

"Oh, you're heartily welcome," she said, looking puzzled. "But it's nowt but t' handkerchief I wear on my head at miln; and I thought I'd maybe wear it now. I've no hat here."

Hugh drew it very sheepishly from his pocket, held it between both his hands, and extended it to her.

"Stop! not in such a hurry," he said, as she was about to take it.

She at once dropped her arm.

"Now, Annis," he said, "I will let you

have the red kerchief back on one condition, and that is, that as soon as I have got you another, you will give me this one back. I value it as a memorial of a very adventurous night. I am fond of keeping memorials. I have got a thread from the chair in which George the Third sat when he was mad; and a bit of the fringe of Mary Queen of Scots' robe; and some leaves off the willow in St. Helena above the grave of Napoleon; and so, you see, I should like also to have this, if I may. Promise."

"Yes," she said, "you shall have it when you want it; but it's just nought."

"Never mind that, I shall treasure it. There, put it round your head, you little Red Cap."

"It's not a cap," she said, smiling.

"Pin it under your chin. That is it. No, I know it is not a cap, but you remind me

of the little girl in a picture-book I had when I was a boy; she had a bit of crimson round her head, just like you, and she was in a wood, with a great wolf looking at her, ready to eat her up. There! now, with your gold-brown hair peeping out, your pink cheeks, and saucy eyes, you are just like the little Red Cap of my boyish dreams. I used to think how I wished I was in the wood, too, with a big stick, that I might protect the poor little thing against the monster; then, I warrant you, no wolf would have come nigh her to devour her. Now, you will remember your promise, Red Cap?"

"Yes, sir. May I go now to mother?"

"Go; and pray God your mother may get better."

"I'm very sorry t' glass stick were broken," said Annis, sighing.

Then she tripped up stairs, and Hugh went to his uncle.

"You have been a long time changing your clothes," said Mr. Arkwright; "or you have been delayed. I thought I heard you descend the stairs some minutes ago."

"I have been in the kitchen."

"In the kitchen! what doing there?"

"Why, sir, I have been considering about having the poor woman's traps moved from her house. You see they are now exposed to the chance of being stolen by any passer-by. She has here, I have ascertained by inquiry, a cousin named John Rhodes; he works at the mill, I think, and the poor creature would feel ease of mind if her goods were placed in his care. Had I not better see to it, uncle?"

"All in good time," replied Mr. Arkwright. "You shall not go till you have had breakfast and some hot toddy, or we shall be charged with you sick on our hands.

After that, go. You take a great interest in those people, Hugh?"

"Of course I do, sir," said the young man, slightly colouring. "I should be an inhuman monster were I not to feel for the sufferings of that poor woman, with her head smashed, and her house fallen, and her little trifles of comfort destroyed. It really is distressing to any man of sensibility. I noticed that you, uncle, behaved most kindly to her, as you lifted her into and out of the boat, and you have certainly evinced considerable kindness in bringing her to your house to be nursed."

"For the matter of that, Hugh, I could do no otherwise; I could not leave them where they were. As every one about here is affording shelter to those who have been driven out of their homes, one must do as others do, or one gets regarded as destitute of feeling."

"Exactly so, sir," responded Hugh, with great cordiality. "You and I feel precisely alike on this point."

"Humph! Well, change the topic."

"By the way, uncle," said Hugh, after having sipped his cordial, "did any one tell you that I was at the cottage exerting myself to rescue those poor creatures?"

"No, Hugh."

"Nor any one tell you that they were in danger, and needed help?"

"No, no one."

"Not Joe Earnshaw?"

"Certainly not."

"Very odd," mused Hugh. "Some one, I suppose it was the watchman, came to the top of the quarry and shouted; we called in reply, telling him that assistance was needed, but he went away."

"It cannot have been Joe," said Mr. Arkwright; "he was with me nearly all the

night. He was not half an hour away; and he of course would have told me. Probably it was some one else, who went off for assistance, only we came before he could obtain it."

Hugh thought again. He did not tell his uncle of the last words of the mysterious voice, but he said to himself meditatively,

"Heaven help me! There may be the wolf after little Red Cap; but I will protect her with my strong arm."

CHAPTER VI.

Hugh was as good as his word to Annis. He communicated with John Rhodes, who readily agreed to find room for his cousin's articles of furniture, clothing, &c., till Mrs. Greenwell had moved into a new house. A cart was obtained, and Rhodes and Hugh drove down the lane, through the water, which had subsided in the glen almost as rapidly as it had risen, and crossing the beck, reached the widow's house. The two men had to wade to the door, but the water reached no higher than their knees, and in the downstair room was only ankle-deep.

The first object that attracted Hugh's attention was the fallen candlestick, still

half immersed. They removed to the cart the mahogany chest of drawers, the sofa, the piano, and then the chairs and tables.

"I think that is as much as can be carried," said Hugh.

"I guess so," answered Rhodes. "I'll drive t' load home now, and return, sir, if you'll be good enough to bide here till I comes back."

"Yes, I will remain; but shall you not want me to help you to unload? I can go with you, and assist in doing that, if you like."

"Nay; there'll be scores o' willin' hands i' t' town," replied Rhodes; "and you can do better here, samming (picking) up bits o' odds and ends."

"Very well then, I am willing."

So Mrs. Greenwell's cousin drove off.

Rhodes was a wool-sorter in Mr. Arkwright's mill, a respectable, well-conducted

man, of middle age. His peculiar branch of work demanded a sharp eye, great practice, and considerable patience. He was well paid, and John managed to live very comfortably on his wages, and on the profits of a little draper's shop kept by his wife. They had several children, but the elder were married, and had left their parents. Rachel, Martha, and Susan remained. The eldest of the three assisted her mother in the shop and house, and professed to be a milliner. Martha and Susan worked in the mills—Martha in that of Mr. Arkwright, Susan in a cloth-mill.

John's wages amounted to twenty-one shillings a week; Martha had a regular wage of ten shillings; whilst that of Susan, who was paid by the piece, varied from seven to ten, or even twelve. How much clear profit was derived from the shop, and from Rachel's sewing, it would be difficult to estimate, but it was not inconsiderable.

Mrs. Rhodes was not a general favourite among the people of Sowden. She was gifted with an unfortunate facility of tongue, and a devotion to the feminine science of slander, which made her a dangerous acquaintance. No one trusted her as a friend, every one feared her as an enemy. Her eyes were everywhere, so also were her ears. What was whispered in the closet at one end of the village was proclaimed by Sarah Rhodes on the housetops at the other end.

She knew who passed up and down Kirkgate in the day, and their reasons for passing, —these were generally of a criminal character. She was acquainted with the opinion formed by every one of every one else; this was invariably unjust and spiteful. The motives actuating every person in Sowden in whatever they did, were bare to the eye of Mrs. Rhodes, and she had the satisfaction

of discovering to the world their viciousness. Sarah Rhodes was an excitable person, and in her spiritual affairs excitement supplied the place of religion. She was a Ranter, or Primitive Methodist, a denomination which supplies sensationalism and excitement to those who have a natural or acquired taste for them. The programme of the devotional dissipations for the season consisted of—A revival in early spring, in summer a camp meeting or two, beginning with invocation of Divine aid, and ending with sweethearting in dark corners. In the autumn a miracle play—Joseph, a sacred drama composed by the Rev. Joseph Hibbert, performed in the chapel; the pulpit serving as a well into which a blooming youth, impersonating the son of Rachel, was lowered by pocket-handkerchiefs. The pulpit also was made use of for a prison, and into it a class-leader acting the part of jailer, violently

thrust the youthful Joseph with glances of fury and a speech in rhymed heroics.

As Christmas approached, missionary sermons, with exhibitions of reclaimed savages, formed an attractive feature in the Sunday evening entertainments. At the time of which I am writing a converted man-monkey, of whom more anon, was drawing a crowd to the chapel. This man in his days of darkness had acted as gorilla in a caravan, had found his way into Armley goal, and had emerged a preacher at two guineas a week, and the privilege of selling a history of his life at the chapel doors, at sixpence each copy. These cheerful diversions in the religious line revolted Martha, the best of the Rhodes' family, and she had broken with the Ranters, and had become a Sunday-school teacher in the Church. Susan was giddy, and had no convictions. She went to church when there

was a school festival or a missionary sermon, and to chapel when there was a man-monkey, navvy, prize-fighter, or dwarf, to hold forth.

John Rhodes himself was not a cordial dissenter, he went to chapel because his wife took him; but he would far rather have spent his Sunday evenings at home with his pipe and newspaper. He thought there was a deal of humbug in religion. He knew that the preachers were not sincere, that revivals made some worse than before, and others spiritually proud, that camp meetings resulted in "misfortunes;" but he shrugged his shoulders, saying that there was little but humbug everywhere, and that there was no avoiding it. He was alive to the fact that a saving faith meant doing the works of the flesh, and that election signified an obliteration of all scruples of conscience. He listened with profound attention to the converted dwarf, standing three feet in his

boots, declaiming in a squeak on the terrors of hell flames, and in his own mind he suspected the said flames had as great a probability of existence as the Bogart, and when he was expected to sing about Meeting being a little Heaven here below, he devoutly hoped there was no such thing as a future life. John Rhodes was rapidly approaching a condition of disbelief in revealed religion, brought on by the humbug and hypocrisy of the phases of Christianity with which he was brought in contact, but he conformed to Primitive Methodism, to insure domestic peace. Of all his children Martha was the dearest to him, perhaps because she was the least appreciated by her mother, perhaps also because she had clung to him with greater love than the others. When his children were little, he had forbidden their going to camp meetings and revivals, lest they should contract a contempt for religion, but when

they grew up they had followed their own wills. Martha had always obeyed his wishes on that point as on any other; and when she had taken up with Church, he had resisted the coercion which her mother had advised, and had suffered her to follow her own religious predilections.

But we must return to Hugh in the ruined cottage.

Having cleared the downstair front room, he examined the kitchen, and collected all the utensils he could find into a heap on the table. He opened the cellar-door and looked down, but as he had expected, he found the cellar full of water.

Then he ascended the stairs, and entered the women's bedroom. He found the box, raised the lid, and feeling under the articles there, in the left-hand corner, touched, and then extracted a clasp purse containing the widow's money. He opened it, and counted

four pounds twelve shillings; he slipped into it a sovereign from his own pocket, then made a memorandum of the money on a piece of paper, closed the purse, and placed it in his waistcoat pocket so as to be able to deliver it over, without chance of its being lightened of its contents, to the owner. He next proceeded to roll up the bedding, so as to be ready for transport, and in so doing, under the pillow, he lit upon Annis's hymnal and prayer-book. He opened them, and saw on the fly-leaf of each,

"Annis Greenwell,
"From her dear friend
"Martha Rhodes.

"Steal not this book for fear of shame,
For in it is the owner's name."

He raised the books reverently to his lips, and then placed them in his breast pocket. Then it struck him that very probably the little girl would like to have her hat or bonnet, so he looked for it, and found both

in a blue bandbox, which he brought downstairs, intending to take it to her at his uncle's house, instead of sending it on with John Rhodes.

Having finished his examination of the front room, he went to the door of the other, and was surprised to find it locked. He pressed against it, and would probably have forced it open, had not a heavy tread sounded within, and some one come to the door, and said in a deep ringing voice:

"Leave my door alone. This is my lodging."

"Are you Joe Earnshaw?" asked Hugh, with surprise.

"Yes."

"Will you help me and John Rhodes to move the things to the cart? We are taking everything away."

"No."

"Will you open the door?"

"No."

"Why not?"

"Because I won't."

"Are we to leave the furniture in your room?"

"It's all mine. You touch it if you dare."

Just then Hugh heard the rumble of the cart, and John's voice; so he ran downstairs, walked through the water to him, and said:

"Do you know the night-watch is there?"

"Joe Earnshaw?"

"Yes, he lodges there."

"I know he does."

"Well, he is locked in his room, and will not come out."

Rhodes shrugged his shoulders, and with a peculiar expression of face, said: "Tha'd better let 'un aloan. I doubt he's none so varry right here," and he pointed to his head.

"Let 'un gang his own road. 'Twon't do to mell (meddle) wi' him. He's a right to stay if he wills. Tak' no notice of 'un, lad. We've plenty to do without, we shall be thronged shiftin' traps."

The kitchen utensils, the box of clothes, the bedding, and everything of any value that the two men could lay hands on, were moved to the cart. Then Hugh mounted, holding the stuffed birds, Garibaldi, the white kittens, and the scriptural picture in his hands, lest the glasses should be broken by the jolting of the wheels. He seated himself on the bedding and John drove. After that he had seen the birds and pictures conveyed in safety into the house in Kirkgate, Hugh departed amidst the thanks of the family, and hurried home, carrying the bandbox with Annis's hat in it. Her aunt had removed the bonnet, which she thought there was no occasion for him to take. Mrs.

Rhodes begged him to tell Mrs. Arkwright that as soon as ever the widow could be moved, they would be glad to receive her into their house.

On reaching his uncle's house, the first thing Hugh did was to inquire after Mrs. Greenwell. His aunt told him that the doctor had been there, and had given no hopes of the poor woman's recovery, and that there was, of course, no possibility of removing her. Hugh delivered the bandbox to her, and asked her to give it to the daughter, and tell her that the money and everything else was safe. Then he went in search of his uncle, and found him at the mill.

The flood had sufficiently abated to give employment to all hands, and Hugh found plenty of occupation for the rest of the day. The water had been in the warehouses, and much damage had been done. Wool was

soaked, and therefore liable to catch fire by spontaneous combustion, unless carefully watched. As much as could be accommodated was conveyed to the drying-house, where it was spread on the iron floor, and the fires relighted. The packages of yarn were brought out and laid to dry in the sun and wind. Girls were employed all day in washing the floors after the men had scraped the silt away, and cast it forth in shovelfuls. The dye-vats were emptied, as the water had got into them and spoiled their contents,—a loss to Mr. Arkwright of some fifty pounds. Bales of wool were broken, and spread on every available dry spot. The machinery which had been in contact with the water was carefully cleaned and oiled.

By evening the mill began to recover its usual appearance. The yard was, however, still full of pools; one wall had been laid flat by the force of the current, and the fold was

full of ruts, and heaps of gravel, ash, and slime.

"We shall not get started this week," said Mr. Arkwright; "and we may consider ourselves lucky if we can bring the place into working order again during the early part of next. Now, Hugh, it is drawing on to evening, and I am as hungry as a hunter. I have had no dinner, have you?"

"No, I could not get away."

"Well, come along. Gretchen shall give us a high tea. There's nothing more to be done this evening. I shall keep three men watching the mill at night till the wool is dry. It will be a wonder if there are not fires after this."

So, leaving the factory, uncle and nephew trudged up the hill to the meal, which their exertions had prepared them to appreciate with unusual zest.

CHAPTER VII.

During the day Mr. Furness, the vicar, called to see the sick woman, and on the following morning administered the Sacrament to her; after which Mrs. Greenwell awaited her end.

The widow was neither excited nor depressed at the prospect of leaving this world. She was of a naturally phlegmatic temperament, and readily acquiesced in the inevitable, especially if that inevitable were invested with religious solemnity. She had a natural vein of heavy piety in her composition, as she had also a natural vein of commonplace. Some people are heavily religious, others are frolicsomely religious. Mrs. Greenwell could not tolerate the latter

form of piety. She was addicted to funerals, and failed to appreciate christenings and weddings. She was opposed to exciting sermons, but highly valued moral exhortations. She was diligent in the discharge of all her duties, and she was resigned to the dispensations of Providence. If a hole were burnt in the bottom of her kettle, she did not murmur, because she knew it was "ordered;" if the fowls made havoc of her seedlings, she was satisfied it was "for her good." When cholera broke out in the land, it was to teach folk a lesson to be humble; when the potatoes were diseased, it was to give them a warning to labour for other meat than that which perishes. She was strongly impressed with a belief in judgments. The Crimean war was a judgment on the land for its impiety; the scarlatina, in her immediate neighbourhood, was a judgment on it for its neglect of the Sabbath.

The opportunity afforded her by the consciousness that she was to die, was greedily seized upon by Mrs. Greenwell for the purpose of pointing morals; a pastime for which she evinced a marked partiality. It may be questioned whether, in her case, the curtailment of life was not counterbalanced by the exceeding gratification afforded her during the rest of her sojourn in the tabernacle of the flesh, of expressing her religious convictions in the ears of Annis, Sarah Anne, and Mrs. Arkwright.

It is not worth while recording these reflections, as they were, though very true, deficient in originality.

Hers was not a poetical death-bed. She did not extend her arms to the vision of the departed husband, the lamented Mr. Greenwell, nor did she hear angels singing, nor did she ask what the wild waves of the Calder were saying; neither, again, did she

bid the vital spark of heavenly flame—meaning her soul—"Quit, O quit this mortal frame!" but she turned to Annis, and said with gravity:

"My dear, I'm sorry I murmured against Providence, agaite of that pig. I know it were for t' best. It were ta'en to prepare me for another world, that I should na set my affections on things here. Thou knows, lass! And may it be a lesson to thee, or ever thou grows up."

"A pigue!" exclaimed Mrs. Arkwright; "ah dear, drive the pigues out of your head."

"Annis," continued the dying woman, "one thing after another is ta'en from us, and all for our good. First thy father, then t' pig, then t' walking-stick, and now I'm boune home. Never mind! we'll all meet again i' another and a better world."

Then she paused for some quarter of an hour, and seemed to be dozing.

Mrs. Arkwright and Annis hoped she would have a little sleep; she had been talking incessantly for a quarter of an hour on religious topics.

At last the poor woman opened her eyes, looked towards the good lady, who bent over her, and said:

"I think I could fancy a pickled onion."

Mrs. Arkwright rushed off in search of one, but the poor creature never ate one in this world, after having expressed this wish. She fell at once into a state of coma, and remained in that condition for three hours and forty-eight minutes, at the end of which time she expired, going off in a state of sleep.

There is a little Methodist work on the dying speeches of true believers, full of very edifying moral discourses. There is also a little Roman collection of the last words of saints. Mrs. Greenwell was neither a

Methodist nor a Roman, so there is no chance of her dying words being inserted in a future edition of either of these little books, but if a collection similar to these above mentioned be made of the last speeches of Church of England folk, it is to be hoped that the final utterances of as pious, and humble, and devout a soul as lived under the Christian dispensation will find admission therein :—"I think I could fancy a pickled onion."

Story writers seem to regard a death as inevitably the most romantic event in life, scarcely second to a proposal. They suppose the poetic instincts to be at that time most highly developed, and the accidents to be all of the most suitable and picturesque description. The departing are thought to retain their faculties to the last moment, to do much talking and indulge in a profusion of sentiment. Such deaths are ex-

tremely rare. Usually the mental powers fail along with those of the body, and the interest completely evaporates. Deaths generally arrive imperceptibly, when the patient is in a condition of insensibility through weakness, or pain. Dying speeches usually precede death by a long interval, and are not often of much greater value than that of Mrs. Greenwell:—"I think I could fancy a pickled onion."

It need hardly be said that for a few days Mrs. Arkwright was so thoroughly engrossed in the Corpse, that Hugh and her husband were left to their own resources.

Mr. Arkwright was very much annoyed at having the woman die on the premises; and he vented his ill-humour occasionally upon his nephew. But fortunately the work which had to be done at the mill to get it into proper order again, to remedy the damage effected by the flood, and the attention

which had to be devoted to the damp wool, lest it should ignite, were sufficient diversions to prevent the misfortune of the death becoming a serious grievance. He laid all the blame upon Hugh, and declared again and again that he should never forgive him for having brought him into this predicament, and that he would rather have given twenty pounds than have had the event take place in his house.

Since the day that Annis had entered with her mother, Hugh had seen nothing of her. He spent the greater part of his time at the mill; and on Mrs. Greenwell's decease the little girl had gone to her cousins, the Rhodes. The funeral took place three days after the widow's death; consequently, for four days Hugh had not met his "Little Red Cap," as he delighted to designate the girl to himself. During these four days her image had constantly been

before him, and he had longed for an opportunity of speaking to her. There was much that he wanted to ask her about. He was anxious to know something of Joe Earnshaw, of the strange voices he had heard on the evening of the flood in the combing-shed; of that call to her from the top of the quarry, and the cruel desertion of her when in peril of her life. He wanted to know what were her future plans; whether she purposed remaining in Sowden, and working, as before, at his uncle's mill. But he could not speak to her of these things in her present distress; he must wait for a more convenient time. Still, he wished to have a few words with her; he knew that the poor little heart was now very sore and tender, and he hoped that an expression of sympathy might go some small way towards healing it.

"It is only natural," said Hugh to himself, "that I should take some interest in

her welfare, considering the part I played the night of the flood. It would be unfeeling in me not to exhibit commiseration at her loss, and I have been taught that the comforting of the sorrowful is one of the spiritual works of mercy incumbent on all Christians. A reasonable interest I certainly take in her welfare—of course nothing more."

That reasonable interest, we will suppose, made him go daily round by Kirkgate to reach his home—which was a circuitous route. This way obviated the ascent up the steep part of the hill, Hugh explained to himself.

The same reasonable interest, probably, induced him to walk on eagerly till he came opposite Mrs. Rhodes' shop; then to look at the windows, to slacken his pace, and, seeing no one, to go along the rest of his way with depressed spirits and drooping eye.

Was it from the same reasonable interest,

or was it the effect of the damp and exposure of the eventful night, that he has now a dull, craving, aching sensation across his breast, which deprived him of his spirits, and consequently of his conversational powers?

One day he walked to a neighbouring town, three miles off, the market town of Sowden, which was only a large manufacturing village, and bought a black silk handkerchief, and a little jet brooch, very neat and quiet, with a Cornish crystal in it.

"One must keep one's promise," said Hugh; "and I told her I would give her another handkerchief for that dear little red one she used to wear. Poor Red Cap! I wonder whether she is crying now; and the drops, brighter than this diamond, are falling from those bonny, large, sad eyes. Oh me! I must have a word with her again!"

Having possessed himself of these articles,

he carried them about with him all day long, in the hopes of having an opportunity of presenting them. Annis was sure to keep her word of letting him have the handkerchief: she did not look like one who would break a promise. No. Hugh felt certain that the coveted handkerchief would be his one day; and till he received it, he kept hostages—which were the hymnal and prayer-book he had found under her pillow. The purse she had, for he had given it to his aunt to convey to her; rightly judging that it would be needed at her mother's death. With the purse he had sent the memorandum of the amount in the purse, and beneath that he had written in pencil:—"I keep your books. When you let me have what you promised, I will return them.—H. A."

Possibly it was a reasonable interest only which induced Hugh every night before he

went to bed, in the quiet of his own room, to draw those books from his breast-pocket and study them, wondering which were Annis's favourite hymns and collects, and then to lay them under his own pillow; but interest, when reasonable, does not generally manifest itself in this form; neither, most certainly, would it lead a sleeper to thrust his hand beneath his pillow and rest with it upon the books.

That Hugh exhibited an interest in the girl, we allow, but to its being reasonable, we demur.

On the fifth day they met; but only for a moment.

Annis had come to the house to thank Mrs. Arkwright for her kindness, and to take away her bandbox, and one or two other trifles which had been left in the room when her mother had died. Hugh had been upstairs to wash his hands for tea,

when he observed a little figure in black on the landing, just emerged from the room of death. He guessed in a moment who it was. Something in his breast gave a great flutter, and nearly choked him. He darted forward, and catching Annis by both her hands, drew her to a window.

The dull evening light struggling in showed him the little girl who had been haunting him day and night, but she looked so different now. No red kerchief, no purple dress, no white pinafore, nor bare arms and neck, but a plain mourning bonnet, and a black dress, and a white collar round the slender throat. But it was the same peaceful, pure face, full of innocence; the same clear complexion, looking now very transparent; the same soft eyes, glowing with tender light, but now brimming over; the same delicate mouth, but now tremulous with suppressed emotion.

Hugh looked into her deep eyes, raised full of confidence and entreaty for pity. The hands he held tight in his own. His heart was swelling, and speech was difficult.

"Annis," he said, in a low tone, "my little friend. I am so glad to see you again. I have been longing——" he stopped. "I wanted to—to tell you how deeply I felt for you in your trouble. Annis! I can't express myself. But I am full of sympathy for you."

He could not let her go. There was rest and peace and relief in holding her, and in looking at her sweet, simple face. That gnawing weariness in his breast was gone now; that wasting anxiety in his heart had vanished. That longing expectation was satisfied at last—as he held her and gazed on her.

"Your promise, Annis," he said, slowly, at last.

She drew her hands out of his; and he

produced his little present and her books, as she offered him a very small parcel in brown paper. A long sparkling drop ran over from her eyes, as Hugh looked at her. Her lips were quivering with the scarcely restrainable sob.

The door of the dining-room opened.

"I must see you again, Annis," he said, earnestly; "I must." Then he rushed from her down stairs.

That evening Hugh was cheerful; he chatted with his uncle and aunt in the usual way, and made himself very agreeable.

"I have got a bit of news for you, my boy," said his uncle. "We shall have the mill running again to-morrow. I have been talking it over with the foreman and engineer, and we see no reason why the work should not go on as usual to-morrow; so I have told the stoker to get the fires up, and have sent to the hands to announce it."

"I am very glad to hear that," said Hugh. "And I hope we shall have no more floods."

"And no fires," added Mr. Arkwright.

"Why, how now," put in Gretchen; "you said you had commanded the man to get ready the fire, and nun! Sie wünschen. Ach, you are a funny fellow. Now you hope there will not fire be."

"My dear, there's a place for everything. I like to have the water in the boiler and not sousing the machinery. I like to have the fire under it, and not consuming the warehouses. Do you take?"

"Take what, Henry?"

"Look out in the dictionary."

"Look out what? Take—I know verwell what that mean, it means, zu nehmen, zu bekommen. Nicht wahr?"

"It means to understand, you little stupid."

"I don't believe it one bit, one atom. I will get my Wörterbuch. Stay. I have it. To take—there now! zu nehmen, zu mitführen, annehmen, bekommen, führen. There, mein lieber Herr! not one meaning to understand, zu verstehen. You see. You use the word all wrong. I know the language much better as you. You are be-conquered, mister. I triumph."

Later in the evening Mrs. Arkwright broke forth in praises of Annis, relating to her husband how the girl had been to thank her for what had been done for her mother.

"She is extraordinary zärtlich, so, you have no nice word in English; so bescheiden, so modest and sweet, and she is so reizend hübsch. Do you not think the same, dear Henry?"

"I am no judge; ask Hugh."

The young man coloured deeply, and be-

came confused. His aunt did not notice this, but insisted on having his opinion.

"I am so very glad that she is nice. I should not have liked one very nasty girl in the house, smelling of oil. Don't you think she is very pretty now, Hugh? You answer not."

"She certainly is not offensively ugly," said the young man, putting on an air of indifference. "My uncle will agree with me in my verdict."

"She is so nice, so sittsam—where you have one word in your English we have tausend. She is in your mill, Henry? Ach, es ist Schade. Then she will learn bad, and be noisy."

"Now come, Gretchen," said Mr. Arkwright, "I won't have you maligning my little lasses. I believe you will not find a better conducted set of girls anywhere. They are merry, poor things, but there is no harm

in that; they have their fun and jokes, but so have you. And I'll answer for it that you may compare them with the same number of girls in any other rank of life, high or low, and for modesty, self-respect, and delicacy of feeling they will not be easily surpassed."

"Hear, hear!" said Hugh.

"Yes," continued Mr. Arkwright, "in these large villages or small towns they are not demoralized. Of course there are bad ones, and frail ones, and foolish ones; but so there are in every class of life. These poor children are exposed to temptations from which those above them are carefully screened. But they learn self-control and self-respect, and there is a truth about them which is wanting in their betters in social position. Now, Gretchen, not another word against my lasses."

"Ach weh! I have poked up the lion."

"I am sensitive upon the subject. I like those I employ to have the credit due to them for those virtues they possess. Now, Gretchen, you know what shoddy cloth is?"

"Jah wohl! it is cloth made of the dust of the nasty black fellow."

"Of devil's dust. You are right. It is cloth made of very little staple, and very much trash. It looks exactly like good old stuff which would stand a tug one way and a strain the other, and which, however long worn, would never wear to holes and rags; but it resembles it only in appearance. Give it a wrench, and it is at once in tatters. The provoking thing is that when you buy the cloth you cannot tell that it is made of shoddy, it looks so good. Experience alone convinces of its worthlessness. Gretchen! I very much fear that ladies in the upper classes are made for the market, like shoddy cloth. They have an air of refinement, of

candour, of modesty, and of amiability, which is very engaging. Some unfortunate man invests his honour, happiness, and welfare in one of these precious articles, and when he takes it home to his bosom he finds it all devil's dust. But I will say this for the poor girls of whom I am speaking. When there is bad, it shows it is such; and when there is loose texture, it lets you see that it is such; and when it looks to be stout material, as, God be thanked, there is in plenty, then never fear, it will wear old, but never wear out. Do you understand me, Gretchen?"

"Nun! für was halten Sie mich denn? To be sure."

"My dear, I hate shoddy. Wherever I go now, I find shoddy. There is shoddy in trade, in literature, in politics, in morals, and in society. Every advertisement in a paper is shoddy. I have not read many books lately, because, before I have got through half a

dozen pages, I see the devil's dust fly out. Poetry is full of it; so are leading articles in newspapers. Look at morals. My good friend and neighbour, whoever he may be, has his vesture of morality most sound and substantial in appearance to his own eyes, and to those of his fellows. Alas! it is shoddy too. However excellent we may think his moral character to be, till the wrench comes, he cannot be sure whether it is made of the staple, or the dust of virtue. How surprised he is when, with the first pluck, it flies to tatters! But if you want to see devil's dust bonâ fide, without an atom of good wool in it, look at political speeches. Here is one by the member for B——, my dear. You know I am tolerably radical in my views, but I should like my politics better if they were not so confoundedly mixed up with shoddy. Have you ever seen the manufacture of felt? No!

well, it is not woven at all, the hairs are rubbed and rubbed together till they become entangled into a web, but there is not an atom of fibre running directly through the fabric, not one straightforward thread, longitudinally, latitudinally, or diagonally, in the whole texture. There you have a figure of this speech. It looks very tough and very substantial, very homogeneous. Gretchen, every fibre of thought, every thread of principle in it, is twisted and contorted; not a thought, not a principle there is other than devil's dust. Gretchen, in society there is an intolerable amount of shoddy passing as real staple; we call it the civilities of life. They are not real. Do you know, I find a positive pleasure in conversing with my operatives, because they are manly, and straightforward, and real. One hears a great deal of shoddy talked about the skilled artisan and his intelligence. I will tell you

what I think of the West Riding specimen, who is the cream of English operatives. I believe him to be a soft-hearted, hard-headed being, who can be turned round the little finger by one man, but who is impracticable to another. He has his good points, and he has his bad points. He is shrewd, he is suspicious, he is perfectly truthful, very self-reliant, and outrageously conceited. When his suspicion is overcome, he is cordial. His respect and affection gained, he is ready to exhibit the greatest self-sacrifice and docility, but if his self-love be wounded, he shows an implacability and ferocity worthy only of a heathen. He is a lover of order and of method. In short, he is by nature adapted to be the most dangerous and desperate of ruffians, or the noblest specimen that can be found, the world through, of God-made man. Now, Gretchen, let us have some supper."

"In the winking of an eye!"

CHAPTER VIII.

MARRIAGE is an interesting relic of a barbarous age.

In times of ignorance, when the sun was believed to revolve round the earth, it was fondly held that wives were conducive to the happiness of men. Education has dispelled this absurd theory, and civilization is rapidly abolishing the institution of matrimony based on the fallacious axiom.

Aristotle, in his "History of Animals," tells us that the scolopendra having swallowed a hook, turns itself inside out to rid itself of the barb. Modern naturalists deny that the scolopendra acts thus. Most of the facts established by the ancients have been demonstrated to be false by the moderns.

The ancients believed that woman was a warm-blooded, domestic animal, of gentle disposition, living on love, whose ornament was a meek and quiet spirit. But the moderns assure us that she is cold-blooded, restless in disposition, a devourer of gold, and stirrer up of strife, whose ornament is varnish and tinsel. Society having once swallowed the matrimonial hook is now, like the scolopendra, turning itself inside out, and evacuating the fretting and burdensome encumbrance. The scolopendra accepted the hook, supposing it to be meat; finding it to be barbed iron, it discharged it. Society gulped down matrimony as a blessing; finding it a curse, it is getting rid of it with expedition.

A wise rabbi married a very little wife, and excused himself to his scholars by observing, "Of evils, I choose the least." Young men of the present day go beyond

his teaching, and of evils choose none. Why so? Not because they do not fall in love as men fell in love in days of yore, but because, though they may lose their hearts, they do not at the same time lose their heads. Their hearts urge them to marriage, their heads restrain them from indulging in a luxury beyond their means.

Girls of the period are like the lilies of the field; "they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of them." What may be laudable in the lily is objectionable in the woman. And few men can afford to unite themselves to one who sins by omission as well as by commission, by omitting to share the labour of her husband, and by committing the offence of squandering the results of his toil. If she does work at all, she reverses the task of the Danaids. They strove to fill a bottomless well, but she

buckets indefatigably out of a well which is shallow, but which she persists in regarding as unfathomable,—her husband's purse.

Young men know this well, and are exceedingly cautious and shy of marriage. A man of fortune may possess a wife, just as he may keep a hunter or a shooting-box, but to a man of limited means such extravagance is impossible.

Human nature, however, remains the same, and young men still fall in love, but reason restrains all but the foolish from giving reins to the tender passion. In these times, the affection of love is something that is born to be killed, like a flea; and no man of sense and a small income is easy, if he feels the irritation, till he has crushed the sentiment out of his soul.

The first sensation produced by a consciousness of being in love is abject terror, —terror lest the heart should win the day,

and the intellectual powers be unable to assert their proper pre-eminence.

Poor Hugh! with a feeling of terror, when he retired to rest that night, did he realize the fact that he was in love, not a little, but with his whole being.

Poor Annis! her timid, tender spirit leaned towards him, unconscious that it loved him, but conscious that, in his presence, it tasted unwonted happiness.

Hugh remained awake the greater part of that night immersed in anxious thought. He felt that his peace of mind was bound up with that little girl. How this had come about was more than he could tell. What it was which had influenced him he could not discover. He had been much in society, he had mingled with a great number of the other sex,—nice enough girls, thoroughly accomplished, good-looking, of engaging manners,—yet had never felt drawn to any

one of them in the way in which he was conscious of being attracted towards Annis. He had talked by the hour to the Misses Jones, the belles of Sowden, without feeling the slightest interest in either of them; he had played croquet every evening in the week with Miss Barden, the fascinating daughter of the squire of his father's parish, and had never felt his pulse throb quicker when he met her than when he parted from her. He had danced five times in an evening with the gorgeous Miss Pinkney, who was regarded as one of the finest women and most eligible matches in the county, and the thought of her had not deprived him of an hour's sleep. He had picnicked at Bolton with Miss Fearne, and lost his way with her in the woods, and she was a quiet, modest, and natural little maiden, daughter of a neighbouring vicar; but he had felt very glad when they found the

high road again. And now, his heart was full of strange cravings, his soul yearning with indescribable earnestness for one whom he had seen very little of, knew less of, who was not his equal in station and education. How was this? All day his thoughts were full of her; he could not sleep for trouble connected with her; her happiness was to him the dearest object of life; one glimpse of her was like a sunbeam entering a gloomy apartment and lightening it up. The sound of her foot made his pulse leap, the touch of her hand kindled a fire in his bosom, the tone of her voice was music to his soul. Why was this? He tried to argue with himself that it was not so. He laboured to convince himself that he was influenced by humanity, not by passion. But his arguments broke down one after another.

"Yes!" he said, starting from the bed on which he had been sitting in the dark, and

clasping his hands to his brow. "I love her, I love her. And it is a bad job, too!"

Then he reviewed his position. Was it right for him to give way to this feeling? Ought he to persevere in the course he had unconsciously taken? What was Annis? A poor girl, working in a factory, without social position and education, and money. What was he? A gentleman by birth and by bringing up, with no means of his own, but with the prospect of becoming partner in his uncle's business, and of finally inheriting his savings.

It would not be politic for him to anger his uncle, nor wise to run counter to the decision of society against unequal matches. There was everything to be said against his giving rein to the passion which consumed him; there was little to be said in its favour.

That little may be summed up in few words; but they were dilated on by Hugh

to himself, and repeated with unnecessary frequency. The girl was good, gentle, and modest. There was a certainty that she was not made for the market, but was of true strong material, following his uncle's illustration. The attraction he felt had come unsought and unexpectedly, and natural instincts were more likely to guide aright in the choice of a mate than social advantages. But Hugh felt that the balance of reason was against his giving way to his passion. "It cannot be," he said; "no, it cannot be! Heaven help me! I must take my firstborn love, and destroy it. I have not betrayed myself to the little girl, and she can have no idea of what is raging within my breast. I must not speak to her any more, I must not see her any more. I must forget the past, and bury my secret in my own bosom. She can never be mine. One thing I have which shall be sacred to

me"—he unfolded the red handkerchief, and spread it before him in the moonlight, and leaned over it; his face working with pain, his hand upon it, his eyes directed towards it, but only dimly seeing it. Then his breast shook, something rose in his throat, a great sob burst forth—two jewels spangled the little kerchief. He caught it up and kissed it, and bound it round him over his heart, and cast himself on his bed. "This is all I have of her, and I shall never part with it."

The week passed, and he kept his determination; but the struggle was greater than he had anticipated; and only by the acuteness with which he suffered did he realize how intense was the love which he felt, how far the rootlets of that plant had spread; how that they had bound themselves round his heart, and had struck into every nerve, and penetrated his whole

system. Night and day there was a gnawing pain in his breast, a pressure on his heart. His spirits failed, he became grave and abstracted. His eye lost its brilliancy, his cheek its colour, his step its elasticity. Mrs. Arkwright noticed the alteration, and bewailed it; her husband attributed it to over-exertion during the flood, and prophesied his speedy recovery. Hugh felt a continual restlessness, impelling him to break off whatever he was engaged upon to commence some other pursuit, in hopes of obtaining relief, but invariably without success. When in the office he was constantly making mistakes in his books. Towards twelve o'clock, when the mill would "loose," his pulse quickened, and a feverish heat manifested itself in his cheek and eye. He knew that a little foot would pass the office door, but he would not turn his head towards the window. As he walked with

his uncle to dinner he felt a longing, which he vainly strove to suppress, to see a figure in purple moving up the high road; in the dusk of evening he would wander down the lane to the left, so well remembered, and linger by the beck, then retrace his steps, and arrive in time for his uncle's supper. During meal-time he spoke little, and longed for it to be over, that he might seek the quiet of his own room, where he could stand at his window, leaning his cheek on his hand, and look out over the valley at the black moors, absorbed in thought, with no eye but that of God to mark the workings of his countenance; or he would lie on his bed, with his face in his hands, hour by hour, without moving. And night and day there was a red kerchief knotted round his breast, rising and falling with his breath, and throbbing with the beatings of his heart. His long night

reveries always ended in one way—by his kneeling down by his bedside, and putting his hands together, and bending his brow to the counterpane, and praying for her whom he could not forget, that she might ever be good and pure and simple in mind and soul and body, and love God and be happy. That gave him some peace. There was One to whom he could speak of her, and speak without offence, for he was asking blessings upon her head. But for that relief he could not have borne his pain.

When a man loves, the whole force of his nature impels him towards the object of his passion, and, in proportion to the energy and power of his character, is the intensity of the feeling. A woman's love burns slowly, with great warmth and light, but steadily. A man's love rages hot and furious, and consumes fuel and furnace.

One day, at six o'clock, Hugh was in the

office door, waiting for his uncle, and Annis passed. He knew she was coming up the mill-yard, though he would not look in that direction. He felt her approaching, though he saw her not. He determinately kept his eyes depressed. He caught the strip of deep purple below the white cover, and two small feet moving nimbly towards him—past him. Then—though he tried his best—look up he must. And he saw a sad little face turned towards him, with two large melting eyes resting on him. A delicate glow of pleasure stole into the girl's cheeks as their eyes met: a scarlet spot burned on those of Hugh. He turned hastily round, and darted into the office, calling his uncle.

On Saturday he saw her again, when Mr. Arkwright paid the hands, but he would not look at her: he kept his eyes on the book, but he saw her through every

fibre of his body. On Sunday, at church, whilst singing one of the hymns, quite unexpectedly his eyes fell on a demure little figure in black, behind one of the pillars in the aisle, with a black silk handkerchief round her neck, and a jet brooch on her bosom, on which sparkled a Cornish diamond.

Martha Rhodes had not seen her cousin dressed for church that morning, as she had gone early to school, but on their return from service, Martha said:

"Annis, where ever did'st thou get yon bonny brooch? I thought we'd gotten all thy black things, lass, and I never saw yon brooch afore."

Annis hesitated and coloured. After a little while she said, in a low voice, with her eyes down:

"It war given me, lass."

"Given thee!" exclaimed Martha: "why

who ever gave it thee, I should varry much like to know."

But her cousin did not seem as anxious to tell. Martha, however, was not to be put off. She was a girl who would have her questions answered, and she stuck to her point till that point was gained.

"It war Mr. Arkwright," answered Annis, at length, on compulsion.

"Which of 'em, deary?" asked Martha.

This was coming to close quarters, and Annis endeavoured to evade a reply. But her cousin was not disposed to allow her questions to be evaded, so she repeated it in a resolute manner.

"It war Mr. Hugh," said the poor little thing, in a faltering tone, becoming very red; "that is,—he gave me t' parcel wi' kerchief and brooch, but, thou knows, it maybe war Mrs. Arkwright as sent 'em me. It's none so likely he'd give them, lass."

Martha looked gravely and steadily in her cousin's face.

"What art thou blushing so very red for, lass?"

"Nay, Martha, am I? I reckon I'm varry hot. Thou sees it's over warm to-day."

"I don't think 't were Mrs. Arkwright gave thee t' brooch," said Martha Rhodes. "Did she say aught to thee about it?"

"Nay, lass, she said nowt."

"Then it war Mr. Hugh as gave it thee."

Annis made no reply, but hung her head.

"I don't think thee ought to ha' ta en it," continued Martha; "it's none right for thee to wear it."

"Eh! why not?"

"It's none right," repeated Martha; "and I'm sorry about it. What made him give it thee?"

"I cannot tell. Thou knows he saved

mother and me i' t' flood, and I reckon it war for a bit o' remembrance o' that, thee sees. I'm varry sure there's nowt wrong i' it. I'm varry sure, Martha, deary!"

"Maybe, there's none. Hast thou had much speech wi' him?"

"Nay, not over much."

"Thou mun have none at all," said Martha.

Martha Rhodes was a noble-looking girl, with abundance of dark-brown hair, a well-formed face, bright colour, a somewhat heavy brow, and fine dark eyes. Her features were not regular, and she was not handsome, but her countenance was very pleasing and full of dignity, and when she smiled or was interested, its expression rendered it lovely. In manner she was blunt; she was frank and candid, truthful and upright. Few but those who knew her could

judge of the depth of heart and tenderness of feeling which existed in her, and which were concealed beneath a brusque manner. She was a very thoughtful and a very determined girl. She seldom acted on impulse, generally she long considered before she took any step of moment; but, when once taken, she held on her course with resolution which could not be overcome. There was not the slightest pretension in her, no affectation, no vanity. She held her own in her family and in the mill, by the quiet strength of her character, not by outward demonstration. At home, her mother respected and disliked her: respected her for her reliability, disliked her because she had broken away from the religious traditions of the family. In the mill she was the central figure in the group of those who were quiet, modest, and womanly, without arrogating to herself that position, or exhi-

biting consciousness that she occupied it; but it was a position she had won for herself by her consistency, and her right to fill it was generally acknowledged. Human nature is the same all the world over, and in every rank of life. Among all peoples, under every clime, are the same phases and varieties of character, that meet us among our own immediate acquaintance. We are very much mistaken if we suppose, that in classes socially removed from our own there is not the same difference of temperament, the same shadings of character, as in that in which we move. To those who look down on the men and women below them, they seem of a level, but they differ among themselves as much as do those who contemplate them from above.

Said the sun to the eagle: "The earth is without form, and void. It is all quite flat."

To which replied the bird: "Not so, O

sun! from thy exalted height thou canst not discern the valleys, the ravines, the hills, the mountains, teeming with life in varied forms of beauty. Descend, O sun, for a little while, and thou wilt find glens deep and gloomy, valleys profound and umbrageous, hills swelling, and lofty mountains ever white with unsullied snow. The earth is certainly not flat, neither is it without form, neither is it void."

We hear people speak of the vice and immorality of the classes below them. I would have those people pluck out the beam from their own eyes before they cast out the mote from their brother's eyes. I would have them know that there are special vices and hidden immoralities in their own class, and that some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some men they follow after. I would ask them, whether vice loses its viciousness because it

is hidden in their class, and becomes exceeding vicious in that below them, because it is visible? Granted that there is much sin, much degradation, much moral corruption, much that is foul, loathsome, sickening in the social depths; yet, let it be known, that it is with its roots in slime that God grows his lilies. Supposing—for I am far from granting—that there anarchy, lawlessness, rebellion seethe, that there moral corruption festers, that there fraud and dishonesty are rife; supposing that thence goes up the malarious reek which poisons and blights; well, granted that there is the haunt of the paddock, the newt, and the worm; yet it is there that God grows his lilies, white-petaled, gold-stamened, sunward-spreading, unmarred by one foul stain.

Cover your face, hold your nose, restrain your breath, and hurry past this nasty pool —and miss God's lilies.

Search where you will on earth, you will find that the Creator has made some form of beauty to live and thrive. There is not a turbid pool, nor decaying refuse heap, not a mouthful of the most unwholesome air, nor a drop of the most stagnant water, that does not teem with life, perfect in its loveliness. Only, you will not see it unless you seek with reverence and with love.

And can it be that souls and human natures, so far excelling diatoms, desmids, and animalcules of every sort, full of beauty, perfect in loveliness, shall not be found adorning and glorifying every stratum of society, however low, however degraded, however despised? But the operative class in the manufacturing counties is not low, neither is it degraded; whether despised or not, it little cares; and through it you have not far to look before you find souls so lovely in their whiteness, so refined in

their delicacy, so beautiful in their simplicity, so noble in their truthfulness, so glorious in their courage, that you will be convinced it is not in the conservatories of the rich alone that God delights to grow his lilies.

CHAPTER IX.

At this time Richard Grover, the man-monkey, was conducting a series of exercises at the Primitive Methodist, or, as it was commonly termed, the Ranter Chapel. He received two guineas a week for his services, and was entertained in turn by the leading dissenters of the Primitive Methodist persuasion.

On Friday evening he became the guest of Mrs. Rhodes, to tea and supper. John absented himself. He had particular business—a game of dominoes at the Mechanics' Institute—which called him away, and deprived him of the gratification of doing the

honours of his own table to the itinerant preacher.

Richard Grover was a middle-sized, bony rather than muscular man, with all his joints sharp, very long-backed, and short-legged. The upper part of his person hardly accorded with the lower; the latter belonged to a small man, the upper to one of large proportions. His arms were long, his hands enormous. His hair was curly and black, cut over the ears in half-moons, running back at the temples, and descending to a point in the middle of his forehead. His eyes were grey and glittering; his lower jaw huge, and his mouth big.

Probably the horrible Simian proportions of this man, and his hardly human countenance, had made an exhibitor of wild beasts hire him a few years ago to impersonate the African gorilla. He was by no means ashamed of this episode in his past history

it was one he delighted to speak of in private and in public, and when he went about to preach, he was invariably advertised as

RICHARD GROVER, OF MANCHESTER,

The Celebrated and Converted

MAN-MONKEY!

The parlour of the Rhodes' establishment was very comfortable. It had its piano, its sofa, and its pictures; one of the latter an oil-painting by a local artist, representing John Rhodes, senior, by trade a slubber, father of the present John Rhodes, not in slubbing costume, which would have become him, but in his Sunday best, which did not become him.

If there be any truth in the Darwinian theory, then *that* man—judging from his portrait—was derived by a process of natural selection from a turnip. There was no contemplating the picture without having the

conviction forced on one, that the ancestral turnip nature inhered still. Turnip was in all the features; there was turnip on the brain, turnip lodged in the stomach, and the soul of a turnip looked out of the eye. Unpleasant as the painting was, no one who looked on it could doubt its fidelity as a portrait.

A picture is about to be presented to the reader, which is exceedingly disagreeable; but, odious as the representation may be, it is a faithful portrait of one of a class terribly numerous in the northern manufacturing counties, where they are doing an incalculable and irreparable amount of injury to religion and morality.

Richard Grover was seated at the tea-table discussing some buttered cakes studded with currants. Mrs. Rhodes made tea. Rachel ate by snatches, being occupied with the kettle, the muffins, the cakes, and the bacon which was being fried.

Martha remained as much as possible in the back kitchen, only coming when necessary into the room where the man-monkey was being regaled.

Annis and Susan took their tea at a side-table; and Annis, having finished hers speedily, settled on a low seat by the fire, and relapsed into her usual meditative position, with her cheek on her hand; but now, instead of contemplating the coals, observing the preacher with wide, astonished eyes.

"You'll have a snack o' bacon, Mr. Grover?" asked Mrs. Rhodes.

"Thank'y, I won't say nay. I like it fat and cut thick. That's the ticket. Just so. Now I'll trouble thoo to teem (pour) th' gravy over 't; I'm partial to th' drippings. Come, now! though I be a Manchester man, I'll say this, mam, I never i' all my born day saw a better rasher nor this. Glory be!"

"It's our own fattening, Mr. Grover."

"I'd be sworn to 't. I can smell thy handiwork i' th' reek—I can taste it i' th' drippings. Hey, lass! pass me over th' spoon. It's a long way handier for swallowing th' drippings. Thae may teem out another cup o' tea, and put in more shuggar."

"Nay, help thy sen, lad."

He did not need twice telling.

"I mak' mysel at whoam, thou sees," he said; "it's a glorious thing that wherever one goes, there's servants o' th' Lord to give a chap his vittles. Hallelujah!"

"Them as is i' th' right road is always provided for," said Mrs. Rhodes.

"Eh! that's sure enew," added Rachel.

"Thou's making a poor tea," observed the hostess; "let me do thee another rasher."

"I could pallate it," answered Richard Grover. "And mind, lass, thae cuts i' th' fat, and never fear about it being over thick for me."

"Thou'st done a glorious work here, Mr. Grover!" said Mrs. Rhodes.

"I have that," said Richard, approvingly. "Wherever I go, it's all th' same. The folks was stirred up grand at Hanging Heaton, where I was Sunday three weeks back. They was converted as thick as blags (blackberries). I'm in mighty request, I can tell thee, owd lass! Go where I will, they want me i' th' next parish. It's grand, thae knows, for an earthen vessel to be a hinstrument o' glory."

"Have you been long converted, Mr. Grover?"

"Only a twelvemonth, mam. Did you never hear th' tale?" He finished his rasher, and thrust back his chair. "You mun be siding th' table," he added, "and when you've gotten all sided, and will clap you down and be quiet, I'll tell you. And I'm thinking," he added, fixing his glittering eye on the

corner cupboard, "that you've sommut i' yond place as would be nice wi' a drop o' warm water and a lump o' white shuggar."

"Ay, I have," answered Mrs. Rhodes, gleefully. "I think I know that you like something comforting. You're not a teetotaller, I reckon?"

"Nay, I'm no teetotaller. But don't think I'm ought again them total chaps. They're a good sort, mind you."

He looked complacently round the room. Mrs. Rhodes was seated on the other side of the fire, Rachel near her; Susan was perched on the sofa-arm. Martha came in and sat in a corner, where she might not be observed. It was dull in the back kitchen among the slops and saucepans, with the cat for company. On the table was a bottle of gin, a tumbler, hot water, and sugar. The man-monkey mixed a stiff glass for himself.

"I'm weak i' my insides," he explained.

"And preaching takes a deal out o' me. The sweat fair siles (runs)off me; you might wring a bucketful out o' my shirt. Now I'll show you sommut, lasses. Look here!"

Suddenly he threw his foot up, and placed it on the table:

"Dost thae see my boot, and th' big nails i' it, mam? It were wi' this same boot I killed my missis, wi' poising (kicking) her when I was druffen (drunk). Eh, lasses! I were a bad un i' my unconverted, unregenerated state. I swore awful. I cussed, and it's mercy o' heaven I warn't struck dead wi' leetning for th' foul words I spake. I'd a tidy sort o' a missis and two small bairns, but I used 'em shameful when I were i' liquor. I never gave 'em enew to eat, I drunk up all as ever I addled (earned), I may say, like he i' Scripture. I've been extortioner, unjust, adulterer. Eh! I could tell you some rummy tales as would make these lasses blush and

throw their aprons over their faces to hide their giggling. I could tell you some rummy things I ha' done," with a significant wink and nod at Mrs. Rhodes. "But, mebbe you're fain to hear th' worst I did. Well!" He looked proudly about the room, with straightened back and erect head; "I'm a murderer! Ay! Th' Lord be praised, I may say, I'm a murderer. I killed my missis wi' this here boot thae sees. I only wear these boots when I'm preaching or visiting special friends. I wouldn't wear 'em out for nowt, for I can show th' very article as did th' job, and it's a great attraction. Glory be!"

"I've a'ways heard," said Martha from the distant corner, "that the biggest rogues are them as is unhung."

"Right, lass!" replied the man-monkey, wheeling round. "The Lord be praised! And I believe there never was a more hawful offender agen th' laws o' God and o' man as

mysel. Weel! you sniggering kitlings"—to Susan, Rachel, and the other girls—"you want to hear all about it; but I'd as lief not tell."

And here we may remark that not one of the girls was "sniggering." Martha looked disgusted; Annis's face was white and frightened; Susan also gave signs of being alarmed.

"And so you're all on tenter-hooks to hear how I killed th' owd brid. Why, thae sees, I did it this road:—Poor lass, she were a'ways a looking out, wi' her pale, hungry face, after me o' nights, and I didn't fancy it. She'd come hanging aboot th' beershop, and axing after me, and fretting and trying to persuade me to come away along wi' her. And folks laughed, and said I was looked after shameful by my missis. So I tou'd her, next time I caught her coming after me that road, I'd gi' her summut as she'd never

forget. Weel, lasses, would you believe it, next Saturday neet she cam' fratching and fretting as afore. I sent her home wi' a flea i' her lug, and when I cam' whoame I fund her there, sitting up biding till I cam'. So I up wi' my foot and I poised her i' th' breast, and she never said owt, but fell as if she were dead. Then I were a bit flayed; I thowt I'd done th' job over fast. I took her up, and I laid her i' th' bed, and doused her wi' cawd water; and bym-by she cam' round. Well! she took bad after; she never got over that, it had brussen summut i' th' inside, I reckon, so she deed i' th' back end o' th' year. But I never got owt done to me, for, thae sees, nobody could say 'twere I killed her, or trouble. Mebbe a little of both. She suffered awful bad, I've heard say, but I didn't heed her much mysel. I went off wi' another woman, and left her and th' bairns to fend for theirsels; and I reckon

that had summut to do wi' settling of her. So if 't war'nt kick only, 't were t'other thing; and as I did both, I don't see as onybody else can lay claim to being th' death o' her but myself. What do you say, mam?"

"Eh! but t' Lord's been gracious to you."

Martha, unable to control her disgust any longer, said:

"I'm very sure, if you had your merits, you'd ha' swung."

"I'm very sure," replied the man-monkey, turning towards her, "if I'd ha' had my merits, I'd ha' been boiling and frizzling i' hell fire. But glory be! it's none by merits, lass, but by faith, we're saved."

The strange man spoke with vehemence, whirling his long arms like the wooden soldiers who spin their flappers in the wind to scare birds. Ever and anon he drank from his tumbler, replenished it, and drank

again. His wild grey eyes flashed, his monstrous jaw worked as he spoke, and his black hair bristled with excitement.

"Merits, lass!" he cried; "dost thae think we shall be axed one word o' that score?—Never a word! Dost thae think thy morality and respectability will save thoo?—Never a bit! What's thy morality and respectability but filthy rags, and dust and ashes? Dost thae think th' Almighty cares one farthing whether thou'st moral or not, or righteous or not, or respectable or not?—Never a farthing! Thae'll be axed about thy faith, and not about thy works, lass. Shall I tell thoo where thy moral lass will be? Hoo'll be i' th' outer darkness, and hoo'll hear nowt thro' eternity, but th' tick-tack, tick-tack o' th' great clock o' time that'll never be wound up, because it 'll never run down. I can tell thoo, there's not a bad deed I've not done, there's not a command-

ment I've not broken; and now I'm justified, I'm sanctified, I'm regenerate. Th' owd things is passed away; I'm no more i' th' flesh, but i' th' spirit."

Martha laughed.

"Ay, I am. I've th' witness i' mysel. I'm one o' th' elect. I cannot commit sin, whatever I does now, because I'm born anew. Thae may read that i' Scriptures, lass, if thae doubts me. See one, John, three, nine."

In his excitement he rose to his feet, and suddenly throwing back his head, burst forth into a hymn, sung with loud but rich voice. It began:

> "Just as I am, all over muck,
> Without a grace, or plea,
> Who've wallowed in the mire of guilt
> With th' devil basting me."

Then, flashing his eye round, and whirling his hands, he roared forth, "Chorus, lads! Out wi' th' chorus, lasses!

"I am coming, I am coming,
I am coming, I am coming,
Unto Sion, unto Sion,
Unto Sion, unto Sion,
Faster, faster, faster, faster,
I am coming o'er the sea!"

This was joined in vociferously by Mrs. Rhodes, Rachel, and Susan.

"I have been sunk in awful sins
That shameful was and foul,
I never gave a single thought
Unto my precious soul.

"Out wi' th' chorus!"

"I am coming, I am coming,
I am coming, I am coming,
Unto Sion, unto Sion,
Unto Sion, unto Sion,
Faster, faster, faster, faster,
I am coming o'er the sea!"

The rollicking air, the excitement of the leader, his vehemence in singing, and the wildness of his appearance, produced a mesmeric effect on all in the room. The mother and Rachel sprang up and threw their arms

about, Susan moved excitedly, at one moment off the sofa, at another on it again. Annis clasped her hands to her face and recoiled against the wall; Martha, even, was not unmoved.

"Heigh!" yelled the man-monkey, suddenly becoming rigid and fixing his eyes on Martha, whilst his arms and hands were levelled at her. "Heigh!"

Martha started back and caught the arms of the sofa, her eyes fixed involuntarily on the wild eyes that glowered at her.

"What do you want?"

"Thee knowest not the truth! Thou art i' th' gall o' bitterness and bond o' iniquity."

"Eh!" cried Mrs. Rhodes; "she's not found th' Lord yet, she's none tasted that he is gracious."

"I knows it," growled Richard Grover. "But th' Lord is wrestling wi' her soul."

Martha recovered herself, sprang from her seat, and dashed out of the room.

"Divil's gotten how'd of her," said the preacher, composedly. Then his eye ranged the room, and in so doing lit upon the upturned blanched face of Annis, who, having never before witnessed a similar scene, was nearly frightened out of her wits by it.

"That's a gradely bit o' lass," said Richard, turning to Mrs. Rhodes. "Is she i th' state o' grace?"

"Oh! nay," replied the woman; "she knows nowt about saving faith."

Immediately Grover fixed her with his eyes, and waved his hands over her. Annis trembled with alarm, and her lips became pale.

"Jump up!" he thundered. She was too frightened to obey, so he caught her under her arms and heaved her to her feet.

Then he began to pray over her in a loud

wailing voice, pausing at intervals for the women to groan and cry for mercy.

"Down on your knees," he roared, forcing the girl down. "Pray! pray out! Cry out for forgiveness! Call out, lass!" Then he burst into spasmodic cries of "Mercy, mercy, mercy!" swinging himself up and down, and waving his monstrous hands about, and over the poor trembling girl. He plucked her up again, and, holding her at arm's-length, bent his head and glared into her face, calling, "Do you feel it? Say you feel it! Aren't you saved yet? Can't you cry?" Then turning to those around, he bellowed forth, "Ax the Lord for her. Call it down. It's coming, it's coming. I knew it. Heigh! she's off!"

Annis had suddenly shaken herself free, and had fled across the room with a shriek.

"After her! After her! Don't let t'owd chap have her. Th' grace o' God's coming.

I' another minute! Eh! stop her, catch her!"

Mrs. Rhodes rushed one way, Rachel another, and Richard Grover bounded across the room and grabbed Annis by the waist, raised her from her feet, and shook her, crying, "Heigh! heigh! Praise th' Lord! It's coming! Heigh! sing out. Desn't thae feel it? Dost thae know whither thae'st boune, unless thae'st converted? to th' lake o' brimstone and fire, where there's reek of sulphur iver i' thy nose, and fire iver i' thy bones, and the worm iver i' thy flesh, and blackness o' outer darkness iver i' thy eyes, and the shrieking o' divils and damned souls iver i' thy ears. Heigh! dost thae not read thy title clear, to mansions i' th' skies, yet? Call out, lass! Call out!" and he shook her again.

A piercing cry of agony escaped Annis's lips.

Mrs. Rhodes and Rachel pleaded for grace on their cousin; Susan, in a state of the wildest excitement, clung to her, crying and pulling at her, and imploring her to speak out. But the poor child battled frantically with the man who shook, and lifted and cast her down, and roared at her.

"Let go!" said a firm voice, in Grover's ear. He paid no attention. The room was ringing with cries and groans and exclamations. "Let her go, I say!" again very decidedly, and the preacher caught Martha's eyes flashing defiance at him, and felt her hands on his arm, endeavouring to wrench them off Annis.

"Not for thee!" he shouted. "Thou shan't mar th' Lord's work!" Then to Annis again, "Pray, pray! Call to th' Lord; say, I'm coming, I'm coming, I'm coming! unto Sion. Faster, faster, faster, faster! I am coming over the sea! ween't thee, but thae

shall! I'm none going to let thee escape! I've a call to——"

Martha sent the contents of his tumbler of scalding gin and water full in his face.

"Thou shalt let her go this minnit, thou druffen vagabone!"

Richard fell back, blinded and tortured with the sting of the hot fluid. Mrs. Rhodes, Rachel, and Susan, ceased their exclamations, their voices failing them in their astonishment.

For a minute only was there silence in the room; and then with a howl, like that of a wild beast, the man-monkey leaped on Martha, all his old fierce, brutal rage excited by the pain and by the liquor he had already imbibed. He caught her by the throat and flung her back against the sofa, his eyes glaring like metal at white heat, his face crimson with its scalding, his hair erect as though electrified, his huge jaw snapping;

oaths, curses, and words of horrible obscenity pouring in a filthy torrent from his lips. In vain did the girl attempt resistance, her strength was as nothing compared with his, now strung to its fullest power by fury, madness, and drink. The women shrunk away alarmed; Annis had not sufficiently recovered her own fright to be able to assist her cousin.

"Gie me th' poker! gie me a knife!" roared the infuriated man.

John Rhodes had done his game of dominoes, had read the *Leeds Mercury*, and looked twice through the *Illustrated London News*, had gossiped with a friend, and at last, thinking to himself that all would be quiet at home, the preacher gone, and his wife wanting to lock up, was returning to his house pipe in mouth.

"There's grand goings on," said a man to him, grinning, as he approached his house.

"Eh!" said a woman, with enthusiasm, "Richard Grover be a working of 'em off i' grand style, I reckon."

Then John noticed a number of people assembled in the street outside his door, and was aware of a considerable noise issuing from his own premises.

"It's like a second day o' Pentecost," said another woman. "He'll ha' made that lass o' thine, John, gie ower goin' to chu'ch."

Rhodes set his teeth, his brow grew dark; he forced his way through the people without answering some sportive sallies from men of his acquaintance, opened his door, and shut it again upon himself as he went in. He strode through the shop, and entered the sitting-room, the windows of which looked out, as did that of the shop, on Kirkgate.

He saw the man-monkey holding Martha down, and heard his yells for a weapon. In an instant John caught him, pinioned his

arms behind his back without speaking a word, and began to thrust him before him from the room.

"Look out!" howled the infuriated man. "I'm punishing that bad 'un, that her spirit may be saved. Let me aloan, man! What art tha' doing? Let my hands go!"

John did not answer a word, but drove him forward.

"Thou'll burn for this i' flames o' hell!" raged Grover; "th' divil 'll ha' the roasting o' thee, I swear. Let me aloan."

John held him with one arm as he opened the street door, then he thrust him out on the doorstep, and with a blow between his shoulder-blades, sent him flying into the middle of the street. Then he shut and locked the door, and returned to the parlour and the discomfited women.

"Eh, who iver?" said Mrs. Rhodes, drawing a long breath.

"Oh, father, how could'st tha'?" gasped Rachel.

John made no reply, but sat him down in the chair vacated by the preacher, and mixed for himself a glass of spirits and water. As he drank it he heard in the street a loud voice singing—

"Just as I am, all over muck,
Without a grace, or plea,
Who've wallowed in the mire o' guilt
With the devil basting me,"

which was followed by a chorus, joined in by the rabble without—

"I am coming, I am coming,
I am coming, I am coming
Unto Sion, unto Sion,
Unto Sion, unto Sion.
Faster, faster, faster, faster
I am coming o'er the sea."

"Wife," said Rhodes, gravely, "nobody in my house, if I can help it, shall iver go to a place o' worship agin."

It was well that he said, "If I can help

it," for next Sunday his wife and elder daughter went as usual to chapel.

Martha passed him, dressed for church.

"Where art tha' boune to, lass?" he said.

"Church, father. And I'm sorry to ha' to go again' thee i' this, but I mun go, and Annis wi' me."

"If tha' mun, tha' mun. But I'm capped thou should go onywheer after what was agait Friday neet. There shall be no more religion for me but that o' nature, which mebbe is t' best a chap can have."

So the women followed their course as before, but John was no more to be seen in his place at meeting.

CHAPTER X.

Another week slid by, and Hugh believed that he had successfully mastered the passion which had taken possession of his heart. It had been hard work, very hard work indeed, but by desperate struggling with himself, and by resolutely staring in the face the difficulties which stood in the way of his persevering with it, he had obtained the supremacy. The tender flower of love which had sprung up and fascinated him with its beauty, and filled the chambers of his inner being with its fragrance, and had bidden fair to expand into such spotless glory of blossom, had been ruthlessly smitten down. He had trodden on the wounded plant, and

beat its buds into the soil. Again had a feeble shoot appeared, looking sunward, and spread its little leaves as hands praying to be spared, but again had he struck it down, and now the soil was black and trampled, and strewn with the bruised and mouldering remains.

At times, Hugh had been inclined to yield, feeling himself unequal to the effort. This sensation generally came on of an evening. Then he would rush into the little conservatory adjoining the house, and pace up and down it. The poor fellow had never felt love before, and now the master passion had seized him, and was grappling with him, exerting all its force, and convincing him of his own powerlessness to resist effectually. In such times he felt inclined to rush off in quest of Annis, and to pour out his heart to her, and ask her to comfort him by the promise of her love. Then he pictured to

himself the rapture of seeing those dear brown eyes filled with light, and beaming on him, and feeling all his griefs and pangs disperse and fly away, as clouds before the morning sun. Then he thought how the waves within would sink and fall to a calm, how the deep waters of feeling, now convulsed and tempest-tossed, would repose, and bask in the glory of that love, desiring never to be stirred again.

Then Hope drew for him a fair prospect —the familiar deceptive picture it delights to present to lovers, with cottage and trellised roses, and, of course, jessamine, and sheep, and cows, and doves, &c.; but prominent in the foreground was Hugh himself, with his arm round a little wife, in purple, whose cheek was on his shoulder, and one hand in his. Considering how impracticable was such an image, it is surprising that Hugh should have allowed his eyes to rest

on it lingeringly, and with frequency. One night he dreamt of this cottage. He thought he was standing with Annis, in the above-mentioned attitude, looking at the setting sun, which glimmered over a distant sea. From the door, led a straight path between rows of hollyhocks, yellow, crimson, white, and maroon. Coming up the path, he beheld his mother, dead long ago, advancing towards him, with grave, peaceful countenance. He thought she took Annis by the hand, and, leading her away, said: "I wish to see whether I like her."

Then Hugh thought he watched the two pace up and down the hollyhock walk, for nearly an hour, speaking to each other in tones which he could not catch. But he thought he saw his mother addressing questions with great earnestness to the girl, which Annis answered with equal seriousness. At length, a beautiful light fell over

the faces of the two, as they came smiling, hand in hand, towards him; and his mother put the hand of Annis in his, saying: "Take her, I love her well. You will be happy together; she is good and true."

Hugh was more impressed with this dream than he chose to acknowledge to himself. The different points in it rose before him throughout the day, and he had difficulty in repelling them. It was the first time he had dreamt of his mother since her death, and her face and her tone of voice had presented themselves before him with a vividness not a little startling.

If she were alive, reasoned Hugh, she would be more distressed than any one else at my having lost my heart in the way I have; she would be the last person to say to me, "Take her, you will be happy together." I can fancy I hear her now pouring forth arguments why I should not yield.

But then, he mused further, who knows whether after death the soul does not see things very differently from the way in which she beholds them in life, and judge not by the accidents of station, and birth, and education, but by the intrinsic worth of the heart? Who knows whether those things which, with eyes of sense, are judged to be of the utmost importance, fade altogether from the vision of spirit, and the disembodied soul, failing to perceive at all these colours wherewith social life invests every individual, realizes only the chiaro-oscuro of the character, its strong shadows, and vivid lights.

But, after all, continued Hugh, what should there be in a dream to influence one this way or that? What caused me to dream?—a heavy supper, of course. Away with these vanities! I will think no longer on them.

At last Hugh was, as he believed, victorious; and he even dared to look at Annis as she passed the mill-gates. Indeed, he sought the opportunity of so doing, for it afforded him an occasion of glorying in his triumph. When he stood in the office-door, as Annis went by, she seldom looked towards him, except she felt very sure that he was not observing her, when she would furtively glance up, and lower her eyes again.

It would be difficult to analyse the girl's feelings. She did not dare admit to herself that she loved him, and yet she really did love him with her whole soft, warm heart. There was no one for her to cling to, now that her mother was gone, but her cousin Martha, and Martha did not engage her whole affections, for they stretched forth, feeling after another object, the nature of which she had not realized. She did not ask herself the question whether Hugh cared

for her, for she did not think it possible that he should. There was no future to her love, very little present, it was nearly all past, and that past confined to the evening and night of the flood, and the moment of meeting at the head of the stairs in Mr. Arkwright's house. All that Hugh had said and done she attributed to his kindness, never imagining the possibility of any other motive lurking behind. She felt nothing of the struggle that went on in the young man's bosom, because there was no possible future open before her, in which he figured. She was glad to see him. Her spirits failed when the day passed without her having rested her eyes upon him, and yet, when she was in his presence, she seldom had the courage to look at him. If Hugh had died, or gone away, she would have spent her days in the same patient, unrepining manner, working diligently for her bread, loving

to dream about him who had borne her so bravely over the beck, and had stood by her in the falling house, and had held her by the hands and asked for the red handkerchief, as a memento of the past, and such reminiscences would have satisfied her.

One day Mr. Arkwright stopped Hugh, as he was starting from his seat, when the whistle had sounded for the operatives to break off work.

"Hugh," said his uncle, dryly, "I observe that you run to the door whenever the mill 'looses.' I hope it is not to look at the girls."

"Girls, sir!" exclaimed Hugh, colouring very red; "what on earth can they be to me?"

"Oh, nothing at all, I hope," said Mr. Arkwright, grimly; "only you must excuse the remark, when I see you rush to the

door the moment the shawls begin to pass the window."

"My dear uncle, I am only looking at the weather."

"I should prefer your taking your observations at a quarter to twelve and a quarter to six, than punctually at the hour."

"Why, you see, uncle, I am so busy with my books, that the time slips by, and, till the whistle sounds, I do not know what the time is."

"I will trouble you to resume your seat," said Mr. Arkwright, "and to change the topic."

How brutally suspicious uncle is, thought Hugh.

Annis had for some time been longing to revisit the old cottage in the sand-quarry. She had not seen it since the flood, and, after the first excitement of moving into her new home was passed, and the first grief

over the loss of her mother had abated, the desire to visit the house, where she had spent many happy years, became daily stronger.

One evening there was no cloud in the sky, and there seemed to be more light than usual. So she said to Martha, "I think I'll just tak' a look at t' ow'd place once again, afore I go home. Wilt tha' come wi' me, lass?"

"Nay, Annis, I cannot; I've a deal to do. But if tha's a mind to go, go thysen; but be sharp, and come home afore dark."

"Ay, I'll not be long. Tha's none occasions to be flayed for me, lass, I know t' lane so weel now, I'd as lieve go there neet-time as day."

"But it's none likely to be dark yet, tha' can come back afore neetfall, if thou mak's speed."

"I'll be back, never fear. But I must see t' place again."

Hugh passed at that moment, and caught her words. As he went up the hill, he knew that she was not far behind him. Once he turned, to observe the beauty of the valley, with the evening light upon it, and the last glow lingering on the moors opposite. The view was much improved by a little figure in purple and white ascending the path in the foreground, a point of life in the still prospect. Then he resumed his ascent. Presently, he observed a green caterpillar with a pink stripe down its back and a horn on its head, traversing the causeway. Having been impressed in youth with a love of animals, Hugh stooped to remove the insect from the stone it was crossing, lest it should be injured by the foot of the heedless passer by, and one was approaching already, and was not far off. The caterpillar was not satisfied with the pacific intentions of Hugh, and resenting the inter-

ference with its liberty of action, rolled off the leaf upon which Hugh was conveying it to a place of safety. This occasioned a further delay, and obliged the young man to lift the insect again. At that moment Annis came up.

"Look here," said Hugh, suddenly rising, and exhibiting the creature.

"Eh, it's bonny!" And the little face glowed, and the eyes brightened.

Then Hugh cast it away, and, suiting his pace to that of the girl, said: "Do you remember our coming up here together, nearly a month ago, one very rainy evening?"

Annis looked up in his face, and made no reply. Could she forget that walk? Never, as long as life lasted! That was the answer of her eyes, but her lips did not move.

"Annis, whither are you going now?" asked Hugh.

"Please, sir, I wanted to see t' ow'd house again, and I'm boune there."

"Do you think the bridge is put to rights, little friend?" he asked, with a smile, looking slyly at her.

"Yes, sir," she answered, faintly, without looking up.

"You'll not need help over the beck, then?"

She blushed, and gave no answer.

"You are very sure that the bridge is set up again? Perhaps it is not."

"Ay, it is, sir, I'm very sure."

"And you are not afraid of going alone down the lane?"

"No, sir."

"Nor of returning all alone?"

"No, sir."

"Annis, I have not seen you since—since you gave me the——"

Oh, Hugh! Hugh! where is that red

kerchief now? Is it not fluttering at the present moment over your heart, which is agitated with reasonable interest, not love, for that has been conquered and completely trampled out.

"My little friend," he added, leaving the other sentence unfinished, "I feel a very strong interest in your welfare, as, of course, is only natural. So I am anxious to know if you are happy where you are? Are the Rhodes' family kind to you?"

"Oh yes, very."

"I hear Martha Rhodes is a great friend of yours. She is a very good, respectable girl."

"She is that!" said Annis, brightening, and looking up; "she's a very dear girl."

"I am glad you like her, for I hear a good account of her from every one. Have you any other great friends?"

"No, sir, none at all but Martha;" then,

after a pause—"Please, sir, I must go down the lane. Martha 'll be angry with me if I'm late, and I said I'd be back soon." For they were at the fork of the roads, and Hugh seemed inclined for a little more conversation.

But Annis, with a quiet "Good evening, sir!" slipped away, and was lost behind the first turn in the lane.

Hugh did not hurry home. He stood where he was and mused. Was the bridge put to rights? Yes, he knew by the testimony of his own eyes that it had been replaced three weeks ago. Was Annis safe alone? Certainly, she had been along that lane night and day for years. Then—all at once—there darted into Hugh's memory the conversation he had heard in the combing-shed. So many events had taken place since then, and he had been so busily engaged in conquering his passion, that he

had not thought much of the incident, but now it recurred to him in all its distinctness.

"I told Annis last time I saw her that I *must* see her again; it was about this matter. I really must ascertain who the speakers were; I am in duty bound to mention the circumstance to her. I consider I should be morally culpable were I to conceal it from her. How odd! I thought when she tripped off that I had something very particular to speak to her about, but I could not at the moment recall it. However, there is time now. I will follow her."

And he hurried down the left-hand lane.

He expected to catch Annis immediately, but he was mistaken. She was anxious to see over the old home before dark, and to return to her cousin as speedily as possible, and she had hastened down the lane at a good pace. Consequently, Hugh did not

overtake her. He crossed the little stream on the foot-bridge, and, on reaching the cottage, found the garden-gate open. It was apparent that Annis had gone into the house.

He passed through the gate, and went in at the front door. She was in the house, at the cellar stairs, seeing whether the water had subsided there. When Hugh entered, she started, and uttered a little cry, not perceiving, in the dusk within, who it was.

"You need not be frightened, little friend; it is I."

"Oh, sir!"

"Annis, I forgot something very particular I wanted to speak to you about. Come here!—what are you doing there?"

"There are some bunches of herbs, some marjoram and thyme, hung up at t' cellar head, I'm getting down. I think Mrs. Rhodes may like them."

"Bother the herbs," said Hugh, impatiently: "I want a talk with you. Will you come to me, Annis? Don't you know, I told you when you gave me the red handkerchief—you remember!—well, I told you then that I *must* see you again. Did I not, Annis?"

"Yes, sir," she answered, faintly, coming towards him.

"I am afraid of your running away," said Hugh.

"I won't run away."

"But you'll be after that pot-marjoram and thyme."

"No, sir! I won't!"

"I cannot be sure of that, unless I hold you as a prisoner;" he caught her gently by her shoulders. "I really want to speak to you very seriously," he said, drawing her gently from the back part of the room towards the broken window, which, facing west, admitted a feeble light from the

evening sky. "Annis!" he continued, "will you hold up your poor little face, and let me look at it? I don't think it looks well; it is sad, and looks paler than it was once. You must not let your troubles weigh on your spirit too much, my dear little girl."

Then he paused, and contemplated her by the soft twilight dying out behind the western hills. She made one little trembling attempt to slip from his hands, but he would not let her go.

"You will be after the marjoram," he said; "I must hold my bird fast, or it will fly away." Again he paused.

"Annis, I must tell you what I have on my mind, and what I want to speak to you about. On the night of the flood, I was at the mill, just as the reservoir burst, or, at all events, as its waters came on us. You know the combing-shed?"

"Yes," in a very low voice.

"Well, I was going past it in the dark, and I heard two people talking—at least, I think it was two, but I only found one. There was a man's voice, and a voice like that of a woman. I went into the shed, and a man rushed past me, but I could see no signs of the other, and yet I searched all through the place. I heard what the man said. He used your name. He mentioned you —Annis Greenwell; and I thought the other voice answered. You were not there, then?"

"No, sir! how could I have been there?"

"Of course not; why should I doubt? Is there another Annis Greenwell in the neighbourhood?"

"I'm very sure there's none," answered the girl.

"Is there an Annis?"

"I do not think it. But, please, sir, who was t' man?"

"That I do not know."

"What did he say of me?"

"He said that he loved you more than his life; that he was mad with love of you."

"Then it was not of me he spoke," said Annis. "I do not think there's anybody would have said that of me."

Hugh did not speak. His heart beat very fast; he had misjudged his strength. All the bulwarks he had erected gave way, as do the pebble and sand walls which children set up on sea-beaches against the advancing tide. Impregnable they had seemed, but the wave rushed on, and they dissolved and vanished at once.

"Are you very sure, dear Annis," he said, with agitated voice, "that no one loves you?"

"Ay! there's Martha, and there's Rachel and Susan."

"But no man?"

"Nay," she answered, shaking her head.

"Annis," Hugh said, earnestly, letting go her shoulders, and putting his hands to her temples, and holding back her brown hair: "Annis, dear Annis! and do you love no one?" She shook her head, as he held it, and looked full in her eyes.

Neither spoke, except with those mute tell-tales, and it was now so dark that they only dimly saw one another's faces. He pressed back her brow, that the faint light might rest upon it, and let him read the language of the great mysterious eyes.

"Annis! there is one who loves you, and loves you with his whole heart:" he spoke low and softly, holding the little head, which he felt trembling, between his palms: "one who has fought very hard against his love for you—has battled with it, as though it were a mortal foe—has thought to conquer

it, but who cannot." The little girl did not speak; her bosom heaved, and the tears of joy and wonder rolled out of her eyes and over her cheeks. "He has struggled desperately against his love, and been miserable. Dear, dear Annis, tell me you do not dislike me; tell me you may get to like—to love me: I cannot live without your love."

Suddenly a dazzling gleam of yellow light shot across the deserted room, and struck the girl's face, then lit that of Hugh. Then they heard a click, and the blaze disappeared. Hugh had seen a ball of flame, nothing more. Now he heard a deep, sonorous voice:

"You cannot live without her love! You must!"

And a black figure stood at the foot of the stairs.

"Who are you?" asked Hugh, angrily. "What are you doing here?"

"Annis!" said the voice, in low, vibrating tones; "poor child! go home—it is late."

"Oh, Joe!" said the girl, feebly.

"Go home at once."

"That is the voice I heard in the shed," Hugh exclaimed; "I am sure of it."

"Mr. Arkwright, if you will meet me in that shed to-night at ten, I will tell you all. Let the girl go home."

It was impossible to resist. Hugh could not prolong his interview with Annis in the presence of this mysterious third; so he said:

"Yes, return home, Annis. I will accompany you;" and he drew her with him from the house.

They walked hastily along the lane, knowing that they were followed by the man.

"Annis," said Hugh, in a low tone; "who is he? you seem to know him."

"It is Joe Earnshaw."

"The night-watch!" exclaimed Hugh.

It was now dark: the wind had risen, and was rushing through the trees, and hissing in the tangled hedge. Hugh was irritated at the interruption whilst telling the girl the secret of his heart, and especially at that secret having been heard by another. The wind made sufficient noise to allow him to speak to her in a low voice without having been overheard.

"How came he to be in the house?"

"I fancy he must be living in his lodging room still. 'Maybe he has not flitted," answered Annis.

"I had so much to say to you, dear little girl," whispered Hugh. "May I see you again some time? We must have our talk out. I had not said half that I had to say when that confounded fellow came blundering in on us."

They reached the end of the lane. Where the roads diverged stood a girl, with a shawl round her head, fluttering in the wind.

"Annis!" she called.

"Yes, Martha."

"Oh, lass! what a time thou hast been!" She eyed Hugh. "Is that Mr. Hugh Arkwright?"

"Yes, it is," answered the young man, in a tone of vexation.

"Oh, Annis, dear lass," said Martha Rhodes, wailingly; "come along wi' me. Why hast thou been——" Her voice broke, and she burst into tears.

"Martha, what's agait?" asked Annis, rushing to her.

"Come along, come along, dear lass," said the elder girl, dragging her away towards the town.

Hugh stood still, and looked after them. He was annoyed beyond measure. He had

been heard telling Annis his love, and he had been seen walking with her in a lonely lane at night; next day this would be all over the place, would reach his uncle's ears, and——

"At ten o'clock, in the combing-shed," said the ringing, bass voice, in his ear, as the watchman strode past him in the dark, and took the way towards the mill.

"I'll be there," shouted Hugh, after him.

CHAPTER XI.

Martha said nothing to her cousin on their way to Kirkgate, but she held her by the hand as though afraid of losing her again. Martha had a great deal more knowledge of the world than Annis, and she was full of apprehension for her friend.

She knew that her heart was true and right, and that she would not wilfully go wrong, but she feared lest her simplicity should be taken advantage of by the unscrupulous.

Martha, with a practical knowledge of the world and its ways, was not injured by that knowledge. She had been brought into contact with it from childhood, and had

been moulded by it into a self-reliant, courageous, and high-principled girl. The world does not always destroy, it often builds up; it does not always ruin, it often perfects. It may fairly be questioned whether the system of education for girls pursued in the upper classes is that best calculated for the development of the character, and whether the gain in ignorance of evil is counterbalanced by the loss of vigour of the moral constitution. Conventionalism is too often elevated to the rank of a first principle, and becomes a motive power in the place of self-respect. Mothers entrust the formation of the characters of their daughters to governesses, whose system is to break up and to destroy the strong, yet delicate mechanism of the child's moral nature, and to replace it by clumsy imitations devoid of the living principle. Simplicity is banished, and affectation occupies its room. Shamefacedness

is cast out to make way for mock-modesty. Truth is obliterated, that insincerity may reign supreme.

And when the work is complete, these dolls of society are thrust upon men in the hopes of charming them, and convincing them that they will prove agreeable companions to them on life's journey. But men are not always in a doll-loving babyhood, nor are wax faces, and an interior of wire-work and brass, and rolling blue eyes, and squeaking mouths a source of perennial delight. Woman, as made by God, is the fairest of his creatures; as re-created by the governess she is beneath contempt.

When Martha and Annis went to the little room they occupied together, the elder girl made her cousin sit beside her on the bed, and then, for the first time, she spoke.

"Annis deary!" she said, "I were fair

downcapped to see thee wi' Hugh Arkwright. I can assure thee I were."

Annis remained silent.

"Lass! why dist tha' tell me tha' wanted to see t' house i' t' sand-pit, when all along tha' was boune to meet Hugh Arkwright?"

"Nay, Martha," said Annis, piteously; "nay, I did not go to meet him."

"Tha' hast been oft wi' him," Martha said.

"It's not true," answered Annis; "I never was wi' him afore t' flood, and I've never been down that road wi' him since."

"But tha'st met him elsewhere."

"I have not, Martha, barring when he gave me t' brooch."

"Thou must go wi' him no more. It's not right for thee to be seen walking i' t' neet wi' thy master's nephew. How did he fall in wi' thee?"

"Oh, Martha, he came to t' house."

"And what kept thee so long?"

"We was just talking."

"What about?"

"Eh, lass! a deal of things."

"Annis," said Martha, in a tone of pain, "this munna' go on. Tha' knows not the foul things folk 'll be saying o' thee; an' gossiping tales there 'll be about."

The little girl crept up to her cousin and put her arms round her neck.

"Don't fret, Martha dear; I would not grieve thee for aught."

"It's not grieving me that matters," said Martha, mournfully; "it's just nowt else but t' right and wrong o' t' case. I'm feered for thee, dear lass."

"I think there's none occasion for that."

"Thou poor little innocent lamb, thou knows nowt o' t' wickedness o' t' world, and

thou'lt fall i' t' snare o' t' devil afore thou knows."

"Nay, Martha, I will not."

"But thou wilt if thou goes trustin' grand folks like that Hugh Arkwright, and walking o' neets wi' t' lads."

"I'll never do it any more."

"I hope thou wi'nt. Annis, wilt thou tell me t' truth if I axes thee?"

"Ay, a sure."

"Annis, did he say owt to thee?"

"He said a very deal."

"Nay, I know that. Did he speak soft like to thee?"

"Ay, he did."

"Did he say owt about love, dear lass?"

Annis hid her face in her cousin's bosom, and made no reply.

"I thowt so! I thowt so!" wailed Martha, clasping the girl to her, and drawing her shawl about her, as though she were a

mother-bird sheltering her young from the hawk.

"And dost thou like him?" she said, in a low, tender, pitiful voice.

Annis clung tighter to her, with her arms knit about her, and the little hands working convulsively at her back. Martha kissed her brown glossy hair, and laid her cheek on the little agitated head which lay in her bosom, swaying herself from side to side, as a mother nursing her babe. "My own little lass," she said, with a broken voice; "thou mun break thy heart rayther nor go wi' him again; he'll do thee a terrible harm if thou trusts him."

"Nay, nay, Martha!" exclaimed Annis, with energy, raising her face, and looking full in that of her cousin. "That he never will."

"Do not be over sure. Keep off t' danger and thou'll no fall. I think I'd

niver hold up my head again if thou did get to shame. I'm a'most heartbroken now."

"Nay, Martha," pleaded the little girl, "don't fret. I've done nought to occasion that, and I hope I shall never do that as 'll make thee cry. Give ower, lass."

"Wilt thou promise me thou'lt never walk wi' him more?"

"Nay, I cannot promise; but I don't think I shall."

"Did he ax thee to meet him again?"

"Ay, he did," murmured Annis.

"Look up, lass!" said Martha, firmly. "This 'll niver do. Thou'rt going same road as many as has led to shame and sin, and thou gives no heed to what I warns thee of, and thou cracks ower thy power to resist temptation, and thou'rt running fair into 't. However, canst thou say t' Lord's prayer, and ax not to be led into temptation,

when thou'rt going head for'ard as wilful as owt into t' midst of it? Eh, lass, if thou goes on this road thou'll come to t' same end as Nancy Eastwood, lass."

The scarlet colour rushed over Annis's face and neck and bosom, and she put her hand on Martha's mouth.

"For shame, Martha! for shame! Dost thou think so bad of me as that?"

"Annis," said her cousin, drawing the hand away; "that poor girl was a tidy, decent lass as ever thou seed at miln, and Bob Atkinson's lad took after her, and she wor stuck up wi' having such a grand follower, and wor lifted up wi' pride, and she thowt mebbe he'd marry her, and thou knows what that came to."

Annis made no answer. The case was somewhat parallel; the son of the village lawyer had kept company with one of the girls from Sutherland's mill, and they had

met clandestinely, for Mr. Atkinson had threatened his son, if he did not conduct himself respectably, that he would turn him adrift. And it had ended in the shame of the girl, and in the young man leaving the place. It had caused considerable scandal in the village, and the conduct of both had been severely commented on. The young man met with harsh judgment for having led the girl astray, and the young woman was not compassionated, because, as the folk said, she ought to have known better than to have encouraged her lover.

"Thou knows very weel," pursued Martha, "that as soon as ever it's known that Hugh Arkwright is courtin' thee, folk 'll be saying o' thee just same as they said o' Nancy Eastwood."

"Thou'll never tell that thou seed him and me!" entreated Annis.

"Nay, I'll not tell," replied Martha, "but

if thou'rt wi' him again, mebbe others 'll see thee too. Did none see thee this time?"

"Ay," said Annis, despairingly, "there was Joe Earnshaw."

Martha Rhodes mused for a little while; at last she said:

"I don't know what to make o' Joe, he knows nobody, mebbe it 'll go no farther." Then suddenly turning on her cousin, she asked, "Lass! did Hugh ax thee to marry him?"

"Oh, nay!" replied the poor little girl; "I never thought of that nor he neither. He just looked i' my face and said, 'Dear Annis, I have loved thee a very long time, and I have striven hard to conquer my love, and now I feel that I cannot live any longer without thine.' He said no more, and then Joe came up and bid me go home, and Hugh went wi' me, and he said nought further,

but that he'd a deal more to say, and he mun see me again."

"Annis," said Martha, "go to bed, my poor little lamb. I'll go see Hugh Arkwright mysen."

"Not now!" said Annis, startled.

"Nay, not now, some day when miln looses."

CHAPTER XII.

At ten o'clock that night Hugh went to the mill. He was glad to have some distraction to thoughts which were none of the pleasantest.

He knew that, in a day or two, he would become the butt upon whom all the scandalmongers in Sowden would exercise their wit, in inventing or embellishing tales detrimental to his character. He knew that these pests of society are ever buzzing round their more respectable neighbours, like wasps about apricots, probing them with their probosces, searching eagerly for the slightest fracture in the skin of their propriety, that they may work it to a large rent, and mangle,

and devour, and pollute what is within. He knew that a sound skin was to them a constant cause of annoyance, and that the minutest defect therein, giving them an opportunity for sucking the fresh sweet juices, and rendering it a tasteless, shrivelled husk, was greedily seized upon by them; so greedily, that at the first symptom of a rent, in a moment they would be in legions on the spot.

Several of these hateful beings might be found in Sowden, sitting in their nests, whirring with their wings, thrusting forth their antennæ groping for food, turning their eyes from side to side, ever watchful for a chance of rushing on their prey.

There was Mrs. Jumbold, the doctor's wife, a thin scarecrow of a woman, with wiry black ringlets, and a pointed nose, who thrived on the most virulent acids in her husband's laboratory. She was sure to be

down, one of the first, on poor Hugh. In a minute after having heard the gossiping tale, she would have on her black poke bonnet and her grey mantilla, and come shuffling along the causeway to call on Mrs. Arkwright, and express to her the distress occasioned to her own feelings by the scandal she had heard of the lady's nephew.

There was Mrs. Cordale, the relict of the deceased postmaster—would to heaven he had taken her with him, or stamped and posted her for the remotest region in infinity, ere he left this world of care! Wise postmaster! he insured his peace by leaving her behind!

There was Mr. Metcalf, an elderly party with dropsical legs; a godless old man, who hoped to win heaven by making out every one to be worse than himself, and to be saved, as best out of a bad bunch, lest heaven should be empty,—a man who, too infirm

to work, spent his days in hobbling on sticks from door to door, getting drinks of beer, and retailing in return slanderous stories.

There was Priscilla Walker, the milliner, unmarried and misanthropic, who loved to hear and speak evil of the other sex, the cause of all the mischief in the world.

There was that gossiping, restless Mrs. Rhodes, with Annis under her immediate eye.

Hugh was of a sensitive nature, and peculiarly fearful of spiteful comment. Physically courageous, he was morally timid. He would have faced a lion's claws and teeth, but he could not stand against a woman's tongue. Had he been a soldier he would not have shrunk before a storm of bullets interspersed with occasional cannon-balls, but the slightest breath of slander made him succumb.

He was certain that every possible varia-

tion would be played on the theme of his evening walk with Annis. His motives would be misconstrued; designs of a base and dishonourable nature would be attributed to him. Persons he met would pass with a smirk, infinitely more galling than a spoken insult; he would overhear a group speaking of him, and at the sight of him they would laugh, and quote a familiar and offensive proverb. Respectable people would shake their heads at him, and exhibit coldness; the worthless would triumph over his supposed fall.

Feeling poignantly for himself, he felt equally keenly for Annis. He knew that she too would be the subject of rude jest and ugly insinuations; that bold and prying eyes would watch her; that her every act and word would be distorted and made occasion of scandal; that, at home and in the mill, she would have no peace; and that, in her

isolation, she would suffer acutely the slur which would be cast on her character.

How could he prevent all this dreadful misery falling upon their heads? He looked round, vainly searching for means. Slander was hydra-headed; if he met and exposed one malignant lie, from its stump would spring seven worse falsehoods. Was there any possibility of checking the story before it spread, of strangling it at its birth? He questioned the possibility. Of Joe Earnshaw he knew little, and could form no opinion as to the likelihood of his repeating what he had heard. Of Martha Rhodes he knew also but little, and he had no opportunity offered him of securing her silence. Probably, as soon as she and Annis reached home, the girl would tell her mother what she had seen, and when once a secret was in Mrs. Rhodes' possession, it became the property of the parish.

It was sickening to the sensibility of Hugh to know that the outpouring of his heart had been overheard by the watchman. He recoiled from the prospect of his words to Annis being retailed at public-houses over pipes and beer, amidst the roars of laughter of the drunken sots who there congregated. He thought of Hezekiah exhibiting his treasures to the messengers, and thereby insuring their seizure and his own captivity. "And I," said Hugh, "have not I opened the treasure-house of my soul, and shown all its richest feelings and most precious desires to one who will carry them and me to Babylon!"

He asked himself whether he could defeat the anticipations of the scandal-mongers by taking a further step. Should he ask Annis to be his wife? Impossible! he had no home of his own, and he knew not whether his uncle would tolerate such a move on his part. Annis was too young, and inexpe-

rienced, and ignorant to become his partner, at all events, at present.

Then why had he spoken to her? why did he declare to her his love, when he had no future open to him, and the way before him was dark?—Because he had been mastered by that passion which he had deemed destroyed. He had followed her to the cottage, relying on his ability to control himself, and his resolution had broken down, his victory had proved vain, his strength had given way.

Should he for the future hold aloof from Annis? His whole sense of honour and right revolted from such a thought; he had told her that he loved her, and bidden her encourage a love for him in return; he had brought her into great trial and difficulty, and had launched the wave over her head, and he could not—he ought not—to suffer her to struggle alone.

Through all his darkness and perplexity one strong, clear light beamed unwaveringly—his faith in Annis. That, nothing could disturb. He believed her to be true, and good, and noble, and worthy of his love, worthy of the pain he should have to bear for her sake.

It may be years before I can claim her as my wife—years before I have the means to support a wife—years before she can be moulded and adapted to what society will demand of my wife; but if we live, and she can learn to trust and love me, Annis, and no one else, shall be mine.

Do I desire for my wife one in whom I can repose perfect trust and confidence, knowing that such trust and confidence will never be betrayed?

Such is Annis!

Do I desire one who is true as steel—whose affection will never swerve for one

moment—whose thought even will never be false—whose heart will wear green, and will stand sunshine and storm, frost and fire, and, like the ivy, will clasp its support in life and death; which, though you may slice through its trunk, will die as it lived, clingingly, without a muscle relaxing, a tendril unloosening, a fibre yielding?

Such is my poor little Annis!

And do I seek a white, unstained soul, as unblemished as when breathed forth from God; as fragrant in its child-like simplicity as mountain thyme; as transparent as the moor spring running over a gravelly bottom?

Such, I know, is the soul of Annis!

And do I ask for a brave little spirit, full of confidence in its rectitude and courage the steadfastness of its faith?

Such again is that of Annis!

What more do I ask? Fortune, position, talent, education? Can I insure the most

precious jewels of all—truth, trust, simplicity, and courage with these other gifts, which are, after all, not gems but settings? These are well enough if one can have them, but without the others they are nothing—worse than nothing, for they make more conspicuous the paste which they enshrine and endeavour to pass off as crystal.

Hugh was young. Self-control grows with years, and is only acquired by experience. Hugh felt with sufficient acuteness that he was in a hobble, that he had committed himself without having calculated the cost beforehand. If the reader supposes, from our having made Hugh the hero of this tale, that he is a model of intelligence, of judgment, of prudence, he is vastly mistaken. The young man was simply worthy, true-hearted, and frank; his youth made him impulsive; his education had not fitted him for self-discipline, such as a man has acquired at

forty by battling with the world. Had Arkwright been selfish and dishonourable he would have shrunk from the consequences he had incurred by his rash, unpremeditated act. But selfish and dishonourable he was not, though impulsive and wanting in judgment he might be.

And moreover, in his inmost soul, Hugh was not sorry that he had spoken to Annis. It had been a relief to his feelings, but he was intensely mortified at having been overheard.

He realized now that, sooner or later, he must have spoken, and that it was simply a question of time when he made the avowal; what he did deplore was the fact, that this avowal had been made in the presence of a third party.

He asked himself again and again, why he had been such a fool as not to see that the house was empty before he began to

speak on private matters to the girl. He remembered now that Earnshaw had retained his furniture and room when all the rest of the articles in the cottage had been removed, and that therefore he had probably resolved on continuing to inhabit it. He ought to have remembered that at the proper time and occasion, and have ascertained whether Earnshaw had left the house before he rushed upon a declaration.

How much had been overheard by the watchman Hugh did not know, but he was aware that the man had heard quite sufficient to have a very precise notion of Hugh's meaning when he spoke, for he had repeated the last words Hugh had made use of.

These thoughts had revolved incessantly in his mind since he had parted with Annis. They recurred in the same order, unbidden, unvaried, with distressing iteration. In vain did the young man attempt to banish them,

it was as though they were affixed to a Buddhist praying machine, which rotates in the wind, reproducing the same images, the same prayers, the same ejaculations, at regular intervals, morning and evening, noon and night, whether observed or not, in man's absence equally with in his presence.

Which slip of thought was uppermost when Hugh reached the mill we cannot say; it does not matter; one was as absorbing as another.

The night was dark and blustering. The wind growled about the deserted factory in the gloom, tossing little wisps of straw, and noisily flapping some wool bags which hung on lines. Sunderland's mill was just distinguishable as a dark stain against the sky, its chimney looking of a ponderous height, lighted by the gas lamp which flickered over the doorway, and was reflected by the opposite wall of the stable.

Hugh passed under the light above the gate to his uncle's mill-fold, and went towards the combing-shed, looking around him for the watchman, but not perceiving him.

On reaching the shed-door he looked in. Within it was as black as pitch, and he could see nothing.

"I suppose I am early," he thought, and leaned against the side-post, waiting the arrival of Earnshaw. It had struck ten when he left the house, and it must have been half-past when he reached the fold.

"Well!" said a bass voice from within, "I am ready."

Hugh started; the sound was unexpected.

"Yes, I am ready too," he answered; "what have you to say to me?"

"Come inside."

Hugh stepped through the door. The watchman must have been seated, for the

young man heard the sound of displaced fragments of iron and wood as he rose.

"Come nigher."

"I will come further if you will let me see my way by your lanthorn, but I am afraid of falling over something."

"Afraid!" with a deep booming laugh.

"Afraid of stumbling," said Hugh; "show a light."

"No."

"Then I will stand where I am."

"Do so."

Hugh heard the man stride towards him.

"What do you want with me?" asked the young man.

"What do you want with Annis Greenwell?" inquired the other.

"Nothing but what is honourable," said Hugh, in a tone of decision. "Why did you act the listener to me when I was speaking to her?"

"Why did you act the listener to me?" asked the other.

"When?"

"The flood-night, in this shed."

Neither said anything for a moment. Hugh kicked the straw about with his foot, doubting what to say.

"I will not have thee following Annis Greenwell," Earnshaw said, breaking the silence abruptly, and with a loud voice.

"I shall pursue my own course," Hugh replied, composedly. "You overheard me tell her that I loved her, which is the truth. You have no right to exercise authority over her, or over me."

"You shall not follow her."

"I tell you, I shall take my course independently of you."

"You daren't!"

"I dare not, indeed!"

"No, you daren't. Do you know what the folk will say of you? Do you know the

nice tales which will be spread abroad of you? Are you ready to be the object of every jest and lie in all Sowden?"

"I tell you, Joe, that with a clear conscience, I will face all that Sowden and the world may choose to say. I would not do that girl an injury for any consideration; and if you fear that, set your mind at rest; she is safe with me."

"And you'll give her pain and misery. That's love!"

"I will cause her none that I can help. If our interview gets to be known, it will be through you or Martha Rhodes."

"You need not fear that I will tell, and you need not doubt Martha."

"Then I am obliged to you. It was distressing to me that you should have overheard me——"

"And to me, that you should have overheard me."

"I will repeat to no one what I heard."

"You told Annis."

"Because you mentioned her name, and said you loved her."

"And so I do. I love her—ah! madly." The rich voice thrilled with emotion, rising in volume till suddenly it changed to a soft musical note of feminine sweetness and tone. "Dearly, and for a long while have I loved her; and she knows it."

"No, no!" said Hugh; "she told me no one loved her."

"She must know it," again in the rich bass. "I have watched her, and lived near her, and do you think that she would not read my heart? Is she so blind as that, imagine you?"

"You never spoke to her," Hugh said, with intense interest.

"No, I never spoke. I am not one to speak. What would it avail me to speak?—to bid a girl look in my eyes, and love me,

and cling to me, and put her hand in mine, her lips to mine.—See!"

Suddenly the lanthorn-shade clicked, a gleam shot across the shed, and Hugh saw the watchman slowly raise the ball of fire. He noticed the coat buttons lit up one after another, then the dangling ends of the comforter; and then the light fell over the FACE!

Hugh recoiled with a shudder of horror, and turned his eyes away. He saw a countenance the like of which he had never beheld before: blood-red, welted, and mangled, and scarred horribly, as though it had been torn with the iron teeth which rend the cloth in the shoddy mills, and then had been suffered to heal up as it would in lumps and ridges and rents and cavities. Two dark, deep-set eyes watched him from under fragments of bushy brows.

Then the light vanished.

Hugh felt sick. The horrible appearance of the face, suddenly flaring out of the deep darkness of the shed in the night, upon him away from the presence of other men, startled and almost unmanned him. The slit lip, with the glittering teeth showing beneath, the torn nose, the riven cheek, the streaked brow, were visible to the eye of his mind still, though hidden from that of his body. He had, in one second, beheld a countenance which had indelibly impressed its hideousness on his memory to haunt him through life.

"Well," said the voice, in sweet musical tones, "you have seen me now. Am I one to ask a girl to love me? Can I hope to win the heart of woman, think you?" Then the bell-note of his strange, changeable voice sounded again. "But I can love. Ay! I can love; and I do love; and with a madness of passion, because it is hopeless

—a madness that makes my brain burn, and impels me to strange deeds. Do you wonder now that I hide myself from the sight of men; that I act as watch at night-time, when there is darkness to veil my face, and that I keep close by day? What sort of life do you call that? I dare not meet men, or I should have all eyes following me, all heads turned to look at me, all faces expressing that feeling which I observed in yours—horror and disgust."

Then Hugh heard the gulping, gurgling sound of restrained sobs.

"If I show myself in the street, the men stare, the women shrink away, the children scream, and then rush after me; the gentle turn their faces aside, and I know that aversion is their feeling; the coarse titter and remark on my appearance. I feel this keenly, and I fly to my chamber, where I may hide my revolting features. I do not

look like a man, but a man I am, and a man's feelings I have. I suffer in my solitude—I suffer tortures—I think I shall go mad. For two years I have lodged at the little cottage in the sand-pit, and have been watchman to the mills at night, when I can walk about and breathe the fresh air under the canopy of heaven, without the prospect of being stared at with horror, disgust, and pity. During these two years I have seen much of Annis Greenwell, and seeing her I have loved her; how intensely, none but myself know, how despairingly, how hopelessly, you may judge. Every hair of her head is precious to me; every look at her fair face is a transport of heaven. But she cannot love me. I know it. It is impossible! I see that she shrinks from me, and that there is abhorrence which she strives to conceal, whenever her eyes rest on me."

He spoke in broken sentences, pausing

between each, and his voice ran through wide variations of tone, now thrilling low like a deep organ note, now tremulous and sweet and high-pitched like that of a female. So great were the differences in the tone of the sentences, that Hugh could hardly convince himself that they all proceeded from the same speaker.

"I was not always thus," the watchman continued; "there was a time when I was young and good-looking as any other man might be."

"Then how——" broke in Hugh.

"I am coming to that," said Earnshaw, interrupting the question. "I was in the tool-setting trade at Manchester. And I did well and was thriving. But there was a strike of the operatives. There were two or three of us wouldn't strike, and I was one. I thought we didn't ought to strike; we were in the wrong; and what was more,

I couldn't afford to strike. I was earning good wages, and I thought them fair. So I stuck to my work. Then one day, as I was sitting at my table, the door opened suddenly, and something was cast in, almost at my feet; it was a tin box, or very like one, but I don't remember over well; I know I bent down from my seat to look at it, and pick it up, and see what it was, and all at once it burst, and I do not know more. That was a trade-union outrage; and it was one of their infernal machines, full of broken iron and glass and vitriol and nails, that exploded. You see what it has done to me. Would you see again?"

"No, thank you!" quickly and involuntary.

"No, I dare say, you would not like to see. But the face you saw is the result of that damned, wicked, cowardly malice of the idle fellows who wouldn't let me work when they wouldn't work themselves."

"Were the authors of the outrage discovered and punished?"

"No. They were not."

"Are you sure it was done by the trade-union?"

"I know the man who did it."

"Then why was he not punished?"

"There was no evidence."

"Nothing, then, was done to him."

"Mark me," said Earnshaw, in a low whispered tone, "if ever I meet him, something shall be done to him; that I swear."

"Do you know where he is?"

"Yes."

"Where?"

"I will not tell."

"What is his name?"

"I will not say."

Neither spoke for about five minutes. The one to break the silence was Earnshaw, who said in his deep notes:

"I have bidden you meet me here, and I have told you this for a purpose. You know now who I am, what my feelings are, and how I suffer."

"You have my most cordial commiseration," said Hugh.

"I don't ask for it; I don't want it," answered Earnshaw, fiercely. "Wait and offer it when it is sought. No! I do not desire it. But I desire this, that you should fear to enrage me. A man thrown on his own thoughts, with all his feelings torn, his sense of pride mutilated, his hopes in life blighted, is not a man to be trifled with; he is desperate as a tiger deprived of her whelps, or as a boar at bay. I am maddening over my love, which can never meet with a return; a very little, and I become raging as those of old possessed of devils. I feel it in my blood, I feel it in my heart, I feel it in my brain. Young man, beware of me; beware how you

exasperate me! I tell you this: Annis shall never be yours! If I cannot have her myself, no one else shall possess her. I shall watch about her, and defend her with fury from the touch of another. You said you could not live without her. *I* cannot live without her. You approach her at your peril! I warn you off."

"I am not to be moved by these threats," said Hugh.

"Be wise in time! Your making love to Annis can come to no good. She cannot be your wife, she is not your equal in station and in education. What would your uncle say to such a match? He would cast you off. You do not intend to marry her."

"I do," answered Hugh; "I will have no other wife."

"I do not believe it! You deceive yourself, and you deceive her. You are trifling

with her feelings; and a young girl's feelings are sacred and precious things, not to be stirred with wanton finger."

"You misjudge me, I assure you."

"I think this," said the watchman; "you are not wilfully purposing her ruin. No! I do not think so vilely of you as that. No! or if I did——," he paused and drew a long breath, which sounded through his teeth—"you would not leave this shed alive! I believe you mean honourably; but I will not suffer this to continue. You must give her up."

"I cannot, I will not! True, I cannot hope to take her to be my wife now, dependent as I am, but I shall work for the time when I may claim her."

"That shall never be. I shall see to that. Young man, I have some regard for you, and therefore I give you this warning. You slight it at your peril!"

And he went past Hugh, swept him aside, and vanished into the night.

Hugh remained no longer at the mill. It was becoming late, and his uncle would miss him. He ascended the hill meditatively, entered the garden, swinging to behind him the iron gate, walked to the front door, and opened it.

Mr. Arkwright came out of the dining-room into the passage, with his pipe in his hand, and his collar and cravat off.

"Where the deuce have you been all this while?" he asked.

"At the mill, uncle."

"At the mill! and pray what have you been doing there?"

"Only having a talk."

"Humph! talk!" Mr. Arkwright frowned, took a long whiff at his pipe, then looked grimly at Hugh, and said, interrogatively, "Petticoats?"

"No, sir," answered Hugh, in a tone of irritation; "why are you always suspecting me? I was having a chat with your watchman, whose acquaintance I have been making."

Mr. Arkwright eyed him steadily.

Not a pretty face?"

"No, a fearful one," answered Hugh, shuddering.

"You don't take," said Mr. Arkwright, bluntly. "I mean, you have not been chatting with a pretty face?"

"Uncle, I beg you not to worry me with these sort of hints."

"Humph! I see. Change the topic—have some spirits."

END OF VOL. I.

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